

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (commonly called the Dingell-Johnson Act) was adopted by Congress on August 9, 1950, and created a federal aid in sport fisheries program.

Photo: Wilbur Stites (left) gave the public a firsthand look at WCD professionals on the job.

Income was now generated by a 10% tax on fishing tackle and was administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The funds were made available to the states annually on a formula: 40% based on available fishing water and 60% on the number of fishing licenses sold. The Dingle-Johnson funds became very important to the Wisconsin fisheries program and were incorporated into the WCD administration identically to the funds generated by the Pittman-Robertson Act. This income enabled research, land acquisition, and habitat development projects to be funded above levels that could be sustained by traditional state funds (license sales). Annual fund accountability and project accomplishment reporting, also identical to the Pittman-Robertson program, resulted in 1951 legislation adding fund diversion protection to the segregated Fish and Wildlife Account within the Conservation Fund. The U.S. Department of the Interior organized the country into four flyway councils—Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific—in 1952 to establish annual regulations as well as to coordinate waterfowl management and research continentally. Each state appointed a top-level administrator and technical person to serve on the council. The FWS function was to provide leadership and technical data. At the suggestion of Wisconsin researcher Curt Kubit, a Flyway Council Technical Section composed of a biologist from each state was formed the same year to advise the council of research and survey findings. The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 created the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife; the latter replaced the former Fish and Wildlife Service, and Daniel H. Vantzen served as its first leader. The Soil Bank Act was passed in 1956 and included a "Soil Bank Program," later called the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), that allowed farmers to retire cropland from production and get paid for it. The program offered farmers three-, five-, and ten-year contracts to convert cropland to grasses, legumes, trees, and water. The resultant permanent grassland restored on much of this acreage not only preserved soil but also was a boon to wildlife production, especially ring-necked pheasant, across the nation. Over 215 million acres were enrolled over the next 14 years. WCD Progress The WCD was now well established as an agency capable of taking care of the state's natural resources, and public trust was at a

high level. WCD director Swift and frequent media national prominence as a conservationist. Fostered by his counsel with Aldo Leopold, thoughtful administrator, and future effectiveness of his composed of conservationists. Here, J. T. V. Schreckel, Emil Kaminski, and J. T. Voigt served as superintendents, presided over management of game forests and and education. Other comptroller (finance), deer, chief ranger, and a ment programs were function during this legislation established



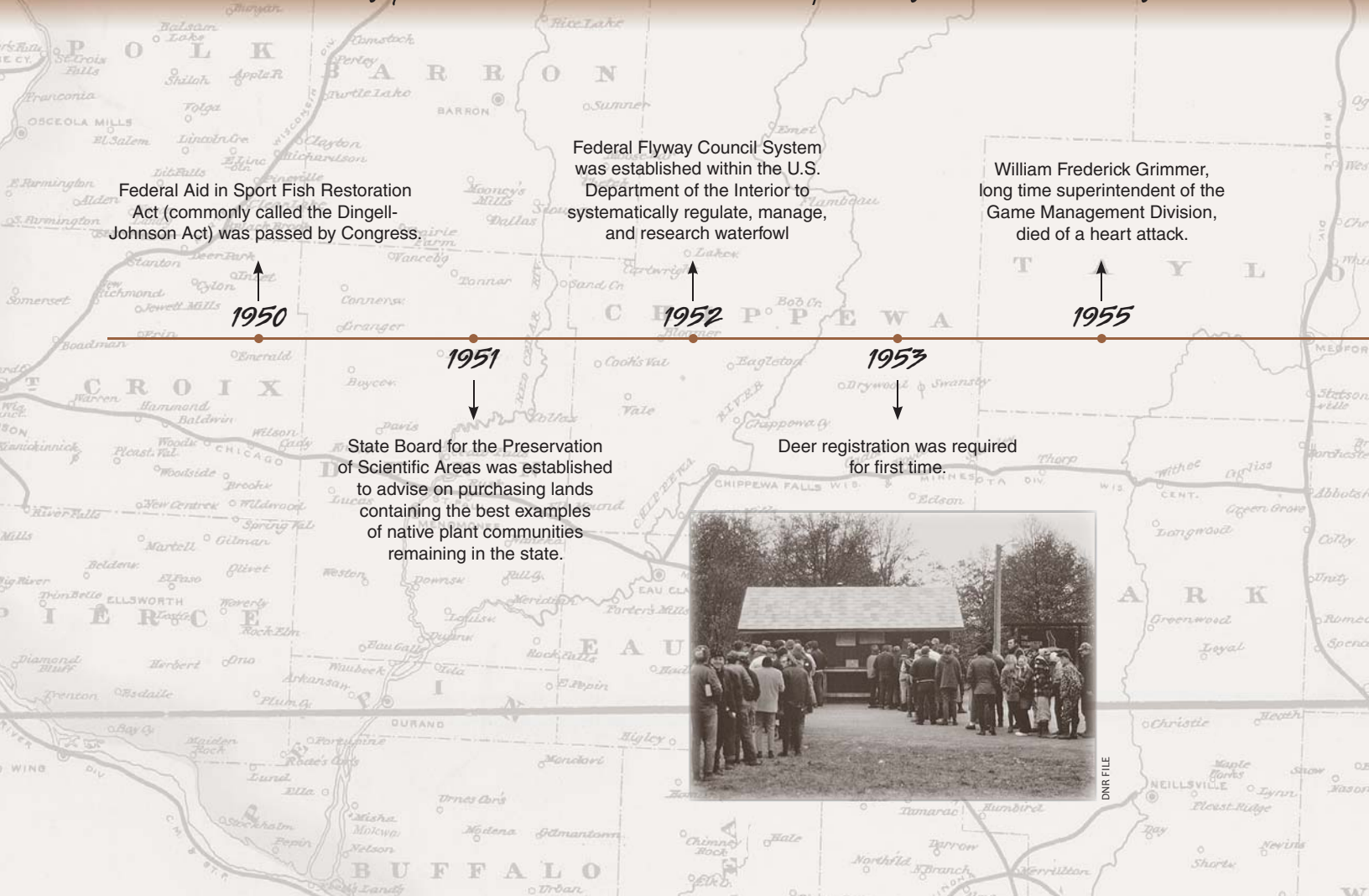
Ernie Swift's progressive coverage elevated him to an outstanding conservationist. Swift's staff was composed of conservation veterans. His top manager and George was the chief legal counsel, personnel officer. Five over the functions of fish management, coordination parks, and information lead staffs, including a chief clerk, chief engineer, chief wardmaster, and also in the state and decade. In 1951, state the State Board for the

Preservation of Scientific Areas to advise on preserving unique native plant communities in the state by identifying rare habitats and protecting such sites by state purchase as Scientific Areas (later State Natural Areas). Reorganization. He required periodic reports to continue the administrative effectiveness of department programs. Swift had seen the successes of the National Management Division organization as well as about by a field structure designed to put game managers closer to the resource and the public. The reorganization made sense to him, and he had the support of other divisions. But he ran into a buzz saw of political opposition when he attempted to reorganize the game and forestry programs along the lines of the Game Management Division. Wardens and foresters resented Swift's plan. Highly regarded by the public, the reorganization branches of state government, they also had very strong legislative support. The reorganization was demanded by the public at the regular Conservation Commission meeting in September of 1952, aware that WCD personnel were taking complaints about "mismanagement" to individual commissioners. Swift told the commission that he could not continue as conservation director, "just fighting windmills" and that he had no "doubt assurance of the commission's support." The state auditor, who spoke at the same meeting, said that he was "beyond belief" with the administrative policies of the director and that "there would have to be strong support by the commission to assure that his [Swift's] subordinates would carry out these policies." In January 1954, the department completed a two-year forestry reorganization assessment and selected candidates for the state's first chief forester position. The position was to have a broad jurisdiction over Forest Parks, Forest Protection, and Cooperative Forestry. It was a bizarre process in that the civil service exam to fill the position actually was administered in 1952 with the three top names cut off state men, announced in September 1952, the appointment was made, and the list expired six months later under civil service standards. A second civil service exam was given later in 1952, but this time the exam was

Chapter 4 Building a Profession, 1950-1960

of the WCD. The top candidates were all foresters with strong administrative background, and the list was announced December 15, with the following rankings: (1) Al Harkness, (2) Stan Welsch, and (3) John Boyle. Boyle, a long-time senior forester in charge (1947) and acting chief state forester since 1952, and poorly on both exams and was not considered for the appointment. He was

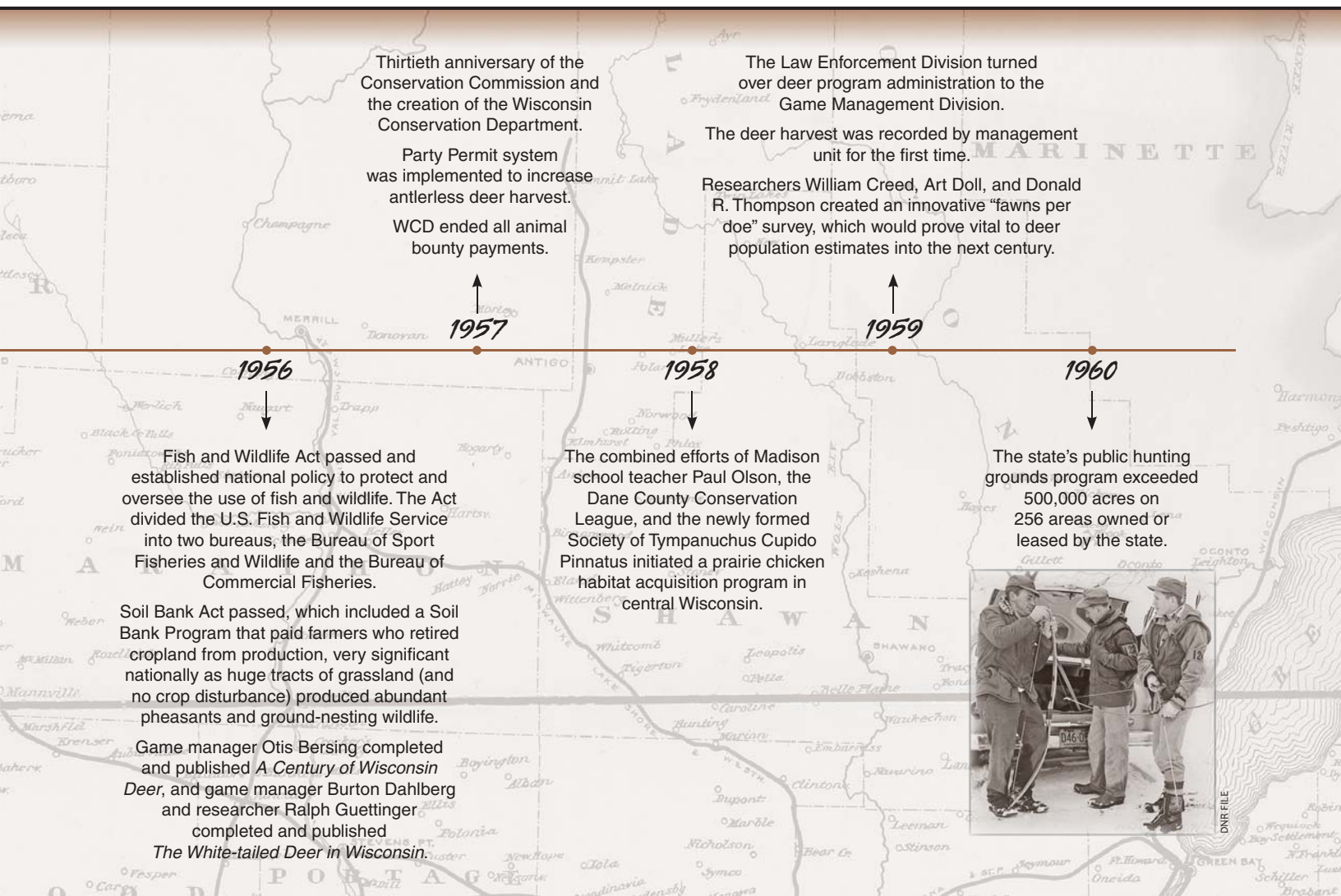
Selected Chronology of Conservation Events Impacting Wildlife Management



Historical Overview



- Wisconsin senator Joseph R. McCarthy started his witch-hunt for communists in 1950. North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, and the war continued through 1953. Wisconsin enrolled 132,000 for the conflict and suffered 800 casualties.
- In 1950, the United States contained 6% of the world's population but had 60% of all cars, 58% of all telephones, 45% of all radio sets, and 34% of all railroads. Thirty percent of the population worked in commerce and industry, but most people lived in rural areas or in small towns with populations less than 2,500.
- Wisconsin reapportioned legislative districts in 1951, the first such effort since 1832. Color television was introduced in the U.S. in 1951. Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president of the United States in 1952.
- Professor Joshua Lederberg, a University of Wisconsin geneticist, won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1958.
- Wisconsin was one of the first states to enable unions to form for state employees when the Wisconsin Collective Bargaining Act was passed into law in 1959. Public employees



could now be represented at the bargaining table with management every two years to negotiate salaries and other benefits.

- The United States and Canada completed a channel through the St. Lawrence River that allowed ocean-going vessels into Lake Ontario in 1959. Other channel improvements between the Great Lakes linked the lakes with the Atlantic Ocean.
- Four governors served in Wisconsin during the decade: Oscar Rennebohm, 1947–51; Walter Kohler, Jr., 1951–57; Vernon Thomson, 1957–59; and Gaylord Nelson, 1959–63, who became the first Democrat to serve since 1933. Dena Smith was elected state treasurer in 1960 and was the first Wisconsin woman elected to statewide office.
- Tourism had emerged as a major industry in the state by the end of the decade.
- The U.S. population had exceeded 180 million by 1960, and Wisconsin's population was more than 3.9 million.



U.S. Department of the Interior

A federal agency whose mission is "to protect and manage the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provide scientific and other information about those resources; and honor its responsibilities and commitments to American Indians, Alaska natives, and affiliated island communities" (mission statement). The agency organization has four major focus areas:

- 1. Fish and Wildlife and Parks*
- 2. Indian Affairs*
- 3. Land and Minerals Management*
- 4. Water and Science*

The Gamekeepers

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (commonly called the Dingell-Johnson Act) was adopted by Congress on August 9, 1950, and created a federal aid in sport fisheries program. Income was now generated by a 10% tax on fishing tackle and was administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The funds were made available to the states annually on a formula: 40% based on available fishing water and 60% on the number of fishing licenses sold. The Dingell-Johnson funds became very important to the Wisconsin fisheries program and were incorporated into the WCD administration identically to the funds generated by the Pittman-Robertson Act. This income enabled research, land acquisition, and habitat development projects to be funded above levels that could be sustained by traditional state funds (license sales). Annual fund accountability and project accomplishment reporting, also identical to the Pittman-Robertson program, resulted in 1951 legislation adding fund diversion protection to the segregated Fish and Wildlife Account within the Conservation Fund.

The *U.S. Department of the Interior* organized the country into four flyway councils—Atlantic, Mississippi, Central, and Pacific—in 1952 to establish annual regulations as well as to coordinate waterfowl management and research continentally. Each state appointed a top-level administrator and technical person to serve on the council. The FWS function was to provide leadership and technical data. At the suggestion of Wisconsin researcher Cyril Kabat, a Flyway Council Technical Section composed of a biologist from each state was formed the same year to advise the council of research and survey findings.

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 created the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The latter replaced the former Fish and Wildlife Service, and Daniel H. Jantzen served as its first leader.

The Soil Bank Act was passed in 1956 and included a "Soil Bank Program," later called the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), that allowed farmers to retire cropland from production and get paid for it. The program offered farmers three-, five-, and ten-year contracts to convert cropland to grasses, legumes, trees, and water. The resultant permanent grassland restored on much of this acreage not only preserved soil but also was a boon to wildlife production, especially ring-necked pheasants, across the nation. Over 215 million acres were enrolled over the next 14 years.

WCD Progress

The WCD was now well established as an agency capable of taking care of the state's natural resources, and public trust was at a high level. WCD director Ernie Swift's progressive ways and frequent media coverage elevated him to national prominence as an outstanding conservationist. Fostered by his longtime friendship and counsel with Aldo Leopold, Swift had become a thoughtful administrator most concerned with the future effectiveness of his agency.

Swift's staff was composed of conservation veterans. His two assistants were H.T.J. Cramer and George Sprecher. Emil Kaminski was the chief legal counsel. L.P. Voigt served as personnel officer. Five superintendents presided over the functions of fish management, game management, cooperative forestry, forests and parks, and information and education. Other lead staffers included a comptroller (finance), chief clerk, chief engineer, chief ranger, and a chief warden.

All department programs were also growing in size and function during this decade. In 1951, state legislation established the State Board for the Preservation of Scientific Areas to advise on preserving unique native plant communities in the state by identifying rare habitat and protecting such sites by state purchase as Scientific Areas (later State Natural Areas).

Reorganization was required periodically to continue the administrative effectiveness of department programs. Swift had seen the successes of the Game Management Division organization brought about by a field structure designed to put game managers closer to the resource and the public. The five-area system used in the Game Management Division made sense to him, and he explored the feasibility of reorganizing

other divisions. But he ran into a buzz saw of political opposition when he attempted to reorganize the powerful Law Enforcement and Forestry programs along the lines of the Game Management Division. Wardens and foresters resisted Swift's plans. Highly regarded by the public as "special" branches of state government, they also had very strong legislative ties. Their collective resistance to Swift's plans led to the controversy being aired in the press.

At the regular Conservation Commission meeting in September of 1953—aware that WCD personnel were taking complaints about him directly to individual commissioners—Swift told the commission that he could not continue as conservation director "just fighting windmills" and that he had to have assurance of the commission's backing. The state auditor who spoke at the same meeting said that he was "tremendously satisfied" with the administrative policies of the director and that "there would have to be strong support by the commission to assure that his [Swift's] subordinates would carry out these policies."

In January 1954, the department completed a two-year forestry reorganization assessment and selected candidates for the state's first chief forester position. The position was to supervise three divisions: Forests and Parks, Forest Protection, and Cooperative Forestry. It was a bizarre process in that the civil service exam to fill the position actually was administered in 1952 with the three top names, all out-of-state men, announced in September 1952. No appointment was made, and the list expired six months later under civil service standards.

A second civil service exam was given later in 1953, but this time the exam was limited to employees of the WCD. The top candidates were all foresters with strong administrative background, and the list was announced December 15, with the following rankings: (1) Al Haukom, (2) Stan Welsh, and (3) John Beale. C.L. Harrington, longest serving forester (since 1913) and acting chief state forester since 1952, did poorly on both exams and was not considered for the appointment. He aired his disenchantment to the press and received strong support from three Conservation Commission members but couldn't get around the civil service exam results.

Swift intended to announce his selection of the highest ranked candidate (Haukom) at the February commission meeting. On February 4, 1954, Madison newspapers stunned everyone with the headline "Swift Resigns!" As Swift had warned, the lack of commission support proved fatal to his WCD career. He immediately accepted the position of assistant director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington, D.C.

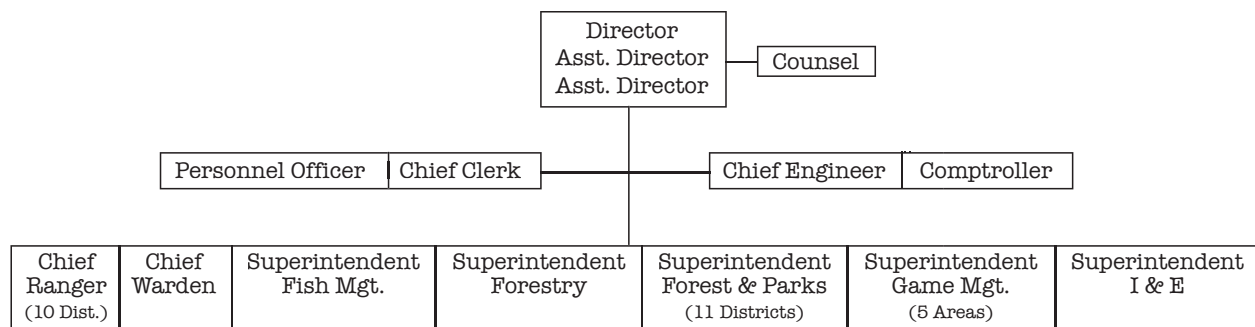
The *Milwaukee Journal* published a six-part series in February airing the disenchantment within the WCD. While one article included assessments of Swift demonstrating his high rating nationwide, others revealed the extent of warden and forester bickering as well as highlighted the rebellion of two veteran administrators: C.L. Harrington, superintendent of the Forests and Parks Division, and Neil LeMay, chief of the Forest Protection Division.

The *Milwaukee Journal* announced "Little Peace on Horizon for Conservation Chiefs" and elaborated on WCD administrator problems as well as the difficulties of finding a new conservation director, appointing the new state forester position, and



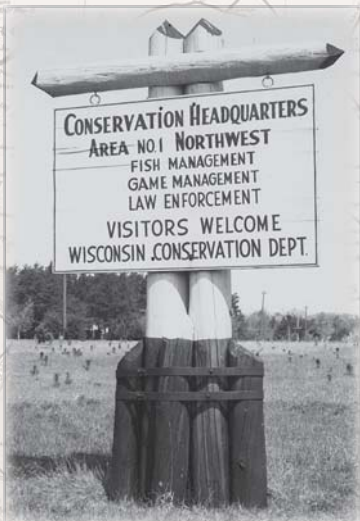
WCD director Ernie Swift was legendary but couldn't overcome internal politics.

Organization chart of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, 1951-1952.





Lester P. Voigt became the WCD's sixth director and would become the longest serving in the agency's history (1955–1975).



Spooner Fish Hatchery, 1952.

The Gamekeepers

the commission facing a legislative committee investigation about the two-year delay in reorganizing the forestry function.

The commission appointed WCD chief administrative officer Lester P. Voigt as acting conservation director on February 19, 1954. On March 31, they announced their unanimous selection of Voigt for the permanent position. Voigt had two business degrees from the University of Wisconsin, had served as a U.S. Navy officer in World War II, and had been hired by the WCD as personnel officer in 1947. He had risen in rank to administrative officer and then assistant director status just before his selection as director.

Voigt immediately chose John Beale as the chief state forester. Al Haukom (ranked number one based on the civil service exam for chief forester) understandably resigned but soon became a very successful businessman and served for many years on the department's Forestry Advisory Council. With a chief forester in charge, forestry received special administrative visibility and forest management and fire protection functions received uniform program direction. The past controversy faded relatively quickly.

State Land Acquisition

Land acquisition was rapidly becoming a tremendous success story for the department. Land was cheap. State ownership was about 357,000 acres, costing an average of about \$8 per acre in 1950. State ownership exceeded 570,000 acres a decade later at a cumulative cost of just \$12 per acre.

Forests and Parks

The parks program continued to be administered jointly with the forestry program to take advantage of the solid funding base created by the mill tax and the revenue that timber production generated. The Forests and Parks Division experienced some significant changes during the decade:

- Another nursery was established at Boscobel in 1951 because of the demands generated by the Game Management Division's wildlife shrub program. The new nursery specialized in wildlife plantings and became the state's largest distribution center for that type of vegetation.
- Initially under the supervision of chief state forester John Beale, Forest Management and Forest Protection became separate divisions in 1956.
- The forest pest program increased when major efforts were made to control the spread of jack pine budworm, Saratoga spittlebug, and a newly detected maple blight disease.
- Fires burned more acreage over the decade than the previous ten-year average because of dry conditions.
- The forest inventory work started in 1950 was finally completed in the northern counties by the end of the decade.
- The Black River Unit of the Central Wisconsin Conservation Area (CWCA) was transferred to the Forests and Parks Division in 1956 and became the Black River State Forest in 1957.
- Other program expansion included High Cliff State Park (1954), Blue Mounds State Park (1959), Copper Culture State Park (1959), and the Pike Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest (1960). An estimated five million people were using 34 state parks by the end of the decade, and state forest recreational use increased by 20%.

C.L. Harrington, the Forests and Parks Division superintendent since 1923, retired in 1958 and was replaced by Roman Koenings.

Fisheries

The Fish Management Division expanded from hatchery and rough fish control to statewide work activities including property management, biological surveys, office work, equipment maintenance, and public interactions similar to field game managers. The Lake Michigan trout fishery collapsed because of sea lamprey predation and

many years of commercial exploitation. Funding for fisheries research, land acquisition, and public fishing land received a significant boost with the distribution of the federal Dingell-Johnson Act funds in 1951.

The term “fish manager” was formally applied to fish biologists some time after 1954. They shared field offices with wardens, foresters, rangers, game managers, and various technicians. Expanding state ownership of public fishing land required additional duties for fisheries personnel including fencing, posting, parking lot maintenance, fish habitat improvement, lease administration, and additional creel census taking.

Law Enforcement

The Law Enforcement Division expanded from 100 to 130 full-time wardens. Uniforms became state-issued in 1952. Two-way radios including portable units became standard equipment in all vehicles and were thought to double a warden’s effectiveness. Airplane use was now routine and was particularly effective in enforcing illegal deer shining activities.

Increased department training, FBI cooperation, and Wisconsin Crime Laboratory use greatly expanded the warden’s information base as well as responsibilities. While the game violator was still the focus of warden attention, duties now encompassed a wider variety of skills from taking blood samples and searching for missing persons to assisting other law enforcement agencies.

Information and Education

The Information and Education (I&E) Division also continued to grow throughout the 1950s. At the start of the decade, newspaper articles, films to schools, a Conservation Congress liaison, exhibits, and publications were the main program ingredients. Credit for some 40,000 visitors touring the Poynette Experimental Game and Fur Farm exhibits was recorded for the division. School programs began to receive special emphasis.

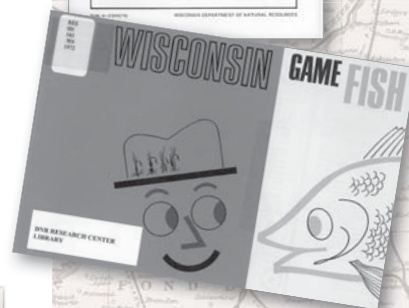
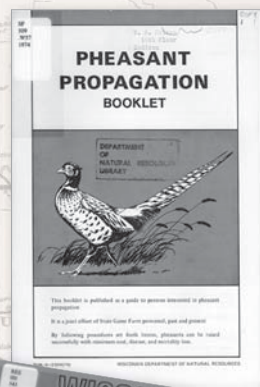
Publications were the primary educational tool of the agency and had expanded considerably from the early days of the division. In the early 1950s, the WCD publication list included the standard monthly *Conservation Bulletin*, wildlife research reports, annual fish and game laws, the *State Experimental Game and Fur Farm Guidebook*, and vacation literature as well as more educational material:

- *Pheasant Propagation Handbook*
- *Among the State Parks and Forests*
- *Wisconsin Game Fish*
- *Wisconsin Wild Flowers*
- *Wisconsin Trout Streams*
- *A History of Wisconsin Deer*
- *Forest Trees of Wisconsin*

In 1956, I&E hired a young man named Wilbur Stites to design and produce a conservation radio and television program called “Wisconsin Outdoors.” The innovation gave the public a first-hand look at individual wardens, fish managers, foresters, park superintendents, and game managers doing their jobs. Public education was elevated considerably by television.



Warden Bill Heibing works with a commercial fisherman, Prairie du Sac, 1955.



Wilbur Stites (left) gave the public a firsthand look at WCD professionals on the job.

The Gamekeepers

Thirty Years of Progress

In 1957, the Conservation Commission celebrated the 30th anniversary of its establishment and the creation of the Wisconsin Conservation Department under the Conservation Act of 1927. Commissioner Guido Rahr wrote about commission accomplishments in the July issue of the *Conservation Bulletin*. The article included a quote from the commission's first chairman, William Mauthe: "Conservation means more than just propagating and planting pheasants and fish to satisfy the predatory instincts of hunters and fisherman." Rahr went on to cite the following highlights of the previous 30 years:

- Horicon Marsh (and other similar projects)
- Kettle Moraine State Forest (and several others)
- State Game Farm at Poynette
- Public hunting and fishing grounds
- Forest Crop Law and county forests
- State parks like Copper Falls, Potawatomi and Terry Andrae
- Forest protection organization
- Enabling act for national forests in Wisconsin
- Griffith Nursery (and several others)

WCD director Lester Voigt also wrote an article in 1955 reflecting on 30 years of conservation growth in the state. He noted five trends that documented the tremendous changes that had taken place since the Wisconsin Conservation Department was established in 1927:

- The state's population had increased by about one million people.
- Automobile registration increased by about 100%; there were better roads and faster speeds.
- Attendance at state parks increased by over 250%.
- Conservation license sales increased by over 600% in nonresident fishing, 200% in deer hunting, and over 120% in small game hunting.
- The acreage in Forest Crop Law lands increased by over 200%, supervision of state land acreage increased by 100%, legal-sized trout stocking grew by 900%, forest fire damage was reduced from an average of 38 acres per fire to about three acres per fire, and the output of state forest nurseries increased 25-fold.

Voigt also summarized what he considered program highlights over the previous 30 years. He credited the Legislature and a supporting public for granting authority to the department to:

- regulate all seasons,
- increase hunting and fishing license fees,
- create additional state forests and parks,
- establish a Forest Crop Law payment to counties and towns,
- promote forest fire prevention and conservation education,
- establish land acquisition of projects like Horicon Marsh,
- create public hunting and fishing grounds, and
- provide federal aid for game and fish programs.



Reorganization

Ironically, considering Ernie Swift's demise, the WCD reorganized in 1956 and 1957 to create five uniform administrative areas: Northwest Area, Northeast Area, West Central Area, East Central Area, and Southern Area, each led by a new area supervisor. In the central office, new positions included the following:

- Two assistant directors
- Administrative assistant to the director
- Personnel officer
- Attorney
- Executive secretary to the Forestry Advisory Council
- Research coordinator
- Administrative assistant to the chief state forester
- Assistant secretary to the Conservation Commission
- Aviation operations coordinator

Operational directives became a standard way of administering a uniform state-wide program in 1956. The directives included director orders and memoranda, general letters by division chiefs and administrative staff, and technical specifications by individuals responsible for special functions.

Budget, Staff, and Facilities

The Conservation Fund, bolstered by a growing hunting and fishing industry, had increased from about \$5 million per year to more than \$12 million by 1960. With increasing responsibilities and expanding programs, the number of personnel grew from 795 permanent and 585 seasonal workers to 1,042 permanent and over 700 seasonal workers by decade's end.

The larger number of central office personnel required new office facilities. The state office building on Wilson Street was moved in November of 1959 to facilities located at 2158 Atwood Avenue and 2026 Pennsylvania Avenue on Madison's east side.

Building color became a unifying standard for the agency. Dark green roof color with matching trim and golden-yellow siding rapidly became recognized by the public as "the conservation department." Property managers invested considerable time painting a band of golden-yellow on the tops of all corner posts for all state properties. Large metal wildlife refuge signs on state park boundaries and at major public hunting grounds used the same color pattern.

Game Management Division

The decade of the 1950s revealed the story of a young profession involved with an increasing volume of wildlife activities and struggling for an identity. Game managers and conservation aids received assignments formerly handled by conservation wardens. This change caused resentment by many wardens who felt their authority was being eroded. It would be a long time before this new function was recognized by the public and accepted by all of law enforcement.

William Grimmer continued to lead the Game Management Division and directed all field activities. The Game Board ceased to function as the newly organized system matured. The central office staff was organized under four division leaders: Walter Scott, cooperative game; Cyril Kabat, research; J.R. Smith, refuges and public hunting grounds; and William A. Ozburn, game farm. Other staff included Norval Barger, Otis Bersing, John Keener, and William Field.

New Organization

Grimmer sent a memorandum on March 31, 1950, to all Game Management Division personnel assigning the five area game supervisors the title of "area coordinator." This new function was effective officially on April 15. From that time on, except for research personnel and the game farm, the personnel in all 16 field districts were instructed to report through this new position to him. (Notice the short chain of command.)



The Gamekeepers

Grimmer added a personal note for manager morale that read, "I know that all members of the division appreciate the fact that a change in supervision and administration during reorganization is a difficult period for all of us. I am depending on each one of you to do your best to make this initial step in the game division reorganization successful."

Because most area coordinators did not have a college degree, biologists were assigned to each of the five areas to shore up the technical end of the profession in the field. This position served each area game coordinator by analyzing surveys, game reports, and research along with any other need that required a biologist's skills. The biologists were:

- Art Doll, Northwest Area
- Boris Popov, Northeast Area
- Ralph Hopkins, East Central Area
- George Hartman, West Central Area
- Fred Zimmerman, Southern Area

With the new Dingell-Johnson fisheries funding starting, game manager Wayne Truax was appointed full-time federal aid coordinator in early 1952 and was located at the Nevin Fish Hatchery in Madison. The position had broad responsibilities and reported directly to the Game Management Division chief. In addition to accounting and reporting duties for fish and wildlife federal aid projects, the position also supervised a land negotiator (E. Parfett), two staff assistants (Francis Cramer and Mike Traino), and the Boscobel Nursery supervisor (Ken Derr).

Expanded Budgets

The annual game program budget exceeded \$1.2 million in 1950 and grew to almost \$3.8 million by 1960. Hunting license sales increased from 460,000 to over 697,000 during this period. The number of permanent personnel changed from 20 district game managers and 131 other permanent employees in 1951 to 34 district game managers and 127 other permanent employees by 1959. A six-day workweek was the norm, a requirement that continued throughout the decade.

Core wildlife program work throughout most of this time period included:

- Administration
- Propagation and stocking
- Exhibits
- Land leases and purchases
- Bounty administration
- Winter feeding
- Publications
- Game research
- Hunting/trapping regulation
- Wildlife damage
- Refuges/public hunting
- Game, deer, fur farms
- Shooting preserves
- Surveys/investigations
- Hunting/trapping reports
- Miscellaneous services

Deer hunting and the size of the deer herd were still embroiled in controversy, and the public's interest and concerns remained extraordinarily high. Gun deer hunting license sales exceeded 300,000 in 1950 but climbed to more than 500,000 by 1960. The resultant revenue paid for a significant portion of the fish, wildlife, and enforcement programs. Developing a better system for tabulating the harvest and improving the distribution of hunters across the state was high on the department's priority list.

Information and Education

Publications remained the most reliable tool for getting wildlife-related information to the public. In 1950, researcher Don Thompson initiated "Small Game Hunting Prospects" as a regular feature in the *Conservation Bulletin*. Research findings and observations from Pittman-Robertson (P-R) progress reports were made public in the *Conservation Bulletin* with the 1952 introduction of "Wildlife Research Notes" by researcher and chief editor James Hale.

Small Game Hunting Prospects—1950

By Donald R. Thompson
Leader, Pheasant-Quail Research Project

Here's the situation as it looked in mid-summer. It appeared generally good—except that cold weather and floods may have reduced the nesting success.

"There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," says an old adage, and game biologists are at the moment of this writing in mid-July wondering if a slip won't show in the current season's bird production.

Optimism ran high when the past winter turned out to be an easy one on most of the state's game bird range. The late winter storms had little effect on birds that had kept in good shape through the warm part of the winter. Winter survival, which determines the number of breeding birds for the next spring, was the highest in years.

rise and fall with changes in the weather and the growing season. So do predictions for the game crop.

Here are the indications. The late, cold spring that occurred this year is still fresh in everyone's mind. April snow storms and cold snaps were common long after the March snow should have been melted. Some still lay in the northern woods when ruffed grouse hens should have been commencing their clutches. Pheasant broods are late and small this year, indicating that cold weather in the pheasant range probably prevented hens from starting to nest early. Bobolinks

The most important WCD publication of the century was released in 1956. Burton Dahlberg and Ralph Guettinger authored *The White-tailed Deer in Wisconsin* (Technical Bulletin 14), thought to be the most thorough analysis of deer in the United States. The book revealed facts accumulated through P-R Project W-4-R, including details about deer biology, mortality, range, carrying capacity, and management, which would guide the WCD for the next 50 years.

Reports Galore

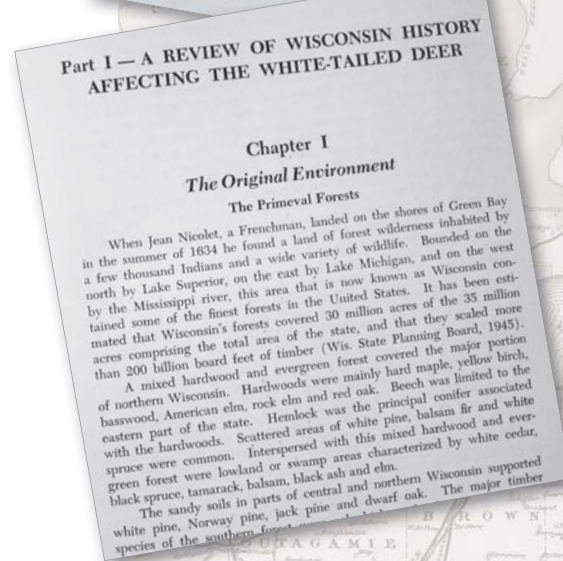
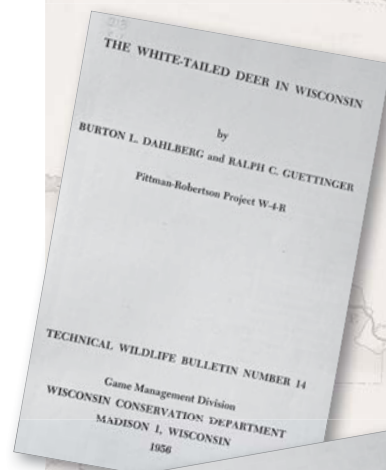
The paperwork generated by the bureaucracy was growing with the profession. A 1954 listing of reports required by the division demonstrates the volume generated on the game manager's desk as well as outlines what they were doing for a living:

- **Monthly reports** – These narratives described negative and positive factors, Pittman-Robertson progress, and work plans.
- **Special reports** – A number of special reports were published each year that covered such topics as important wildlife observations, climatic influences, wildfires, and drainage observations. Supervisors wrote progress reports on closed areas, deer herd management, winter feeding, and beaver control.
- **Pittman-Robertson research reports and development, maintenance, coordination, and land acquisition annual reports** – Research reports were due quarterly in April, July, October, and January. Maintenance and development reports were due by July 15 each year. Land acquisition and coordination reports were also produced annually.
- **Project reports, non-federal aid** – Reports on major operations of state game projects were sent to area coordinators by July 15 each year.
- **Public relations, extension services, and cooperation reports** – These reports included the number of requests for assistance, identified cooperators, and the type of assistance rendered.
- **Report on winter feeding of game birds** – This annual report was submitted to the area coordinators by July 12.
- **Deer herd management report** – This general narrative reported on winter conditions, organization, and effectiveness of the program. It also summarized browse improvement work, including cutting, burning, and bulldozing, and included information on location, ownership, acreages, techniques, evaluation, and costs.

The report incorporated data on commercial timber sales and cultural operations designed to improve browse conditions, and it included statistical information on areas mapped on aerial flights, timber sales inspection, deer yard cruising, dead deer checks, and public relations/publicity programs.

The deer herd management report also included statistical data on deer feeding, amounts and types of feed, use, feeding periods, and sales. For insurance purposes, the report included details on feed storage, quantity and estimated values for each storage site, and department building number or county, township, range, and section for non-department buildings.

- **Biennial reports** – Game Management Division biennial reports were submitted in even-numbered years by August 1 to the game farm supervisor, wildlife research chief, and Madison staff. The game farm supervisor submitted a concise statement of activities and accomplishments for the period July 1 to June 30 of each even-numbered year which, along with the prior year's annual report, was included with the biennial report. The wildlife research chief and federal aid coordinator submitted concise statements of development, maintenance and research project accomplishments, and findings.
- **Research Section reports** – These reports included game survey and census, hunter checks, annual waterfowl report to the Mississippi Flyway Council, and



*The most important WCD publication of the century was released in 1956. Burton Dahlberg and Ralph Guettinger authored *The White-tailed Deer in Wisconsin*.*

The Gamekeepers

deer season reports. A brief summary was sent to members of the game, law enforcement, and public relations boards, division supervisory personnel, director, assistant director, commissioners, and division chiefs.

- **State Experimental Game and Fur Farm Report** – The farm supervisor submitted a cooperating club list by May 1 and an annual report by February 15 to the Game Management Division director. The annual report included pheasant egg and chick distribution, ornamental bird production, and pheasant egg distribution by county, day-old-chick distribution by county and public hunting grounds, game bird distribution (spring, fall, and breeders) by county and public hunting grounds, raccoon distribution, and other stocking.

The supervisor included a brief narrative in the report summarizing important activities of the “clearinghouse” (confiscated game), mink studies, construction and expansion, and predator control. He was also required to submit an additional annual narrative report summarizing, quantitatively, information on game farms, deer farms, fur farms, and shooting preserves. The report discussed trends and included information from prior years for comparative purposes. A statement of work plans was included for the ensuing year.

- **Time Reports** – The need for a statewide system of reporting the exact number of hours of fish and game personnel spent on projects involving Pittman-Robertson funds became apparent during the 1950s to satisfy federal auditors. This resulted in the creation of a 3” x 8” booklet that game managers used to record daily work activities. They entered various work tasks by hand like “Fencing – Avoca” or “PHG Posting – Bakken’s Pond” or “Office Correspondence” and filed the tear-off carbon copy with the area office each week. The time recording system enabled accountants to tabulate labor totals devoted to various projects with precision, and the annual filing of labor hours and wages satisfied rigid Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson reporting requirements. By decade’s end, standard time reports were used statewide by all field functions.

• Game Management Division (central office) staff reports –

Reports at this level covered both central office and field activities. It was a monstrous undertaking and documented the tremendous variety of game management activity ongoing in the state. The following reports were required:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Bow season report | • Tree/shrub plantings |
| • Gun deer kill | • Land purchase data |
| • Beaver control | • Sales/land exchanges |
| • Winter bird feeding | • Sales of materials/products |
| • Game/fur harvest | • <i>Sharecropping</i> /land use |
| • Game kill charts | • Beaver harvest supplements |
| • License sales charts | • Extension services |
| • Hunting accidents | • Cooperation |
| • Deer feeding costs | • Publicity/public relations |
| • Deer yard costs | • Damage claims/expenditures |
| • Deer yard acreages | • State bounties |
| • Refuge revisions | • Field observations |
| • Game questionnaire | • Public hunting grounds |
| • News releases | • Closed areas |
| • Fur questionnaire | • Public hunting/fishing ground |

Sharecrop program

DNR contract program for state-owned land employing a farmer who provides seed, fertilizer, herbicide, labor, and machinery to produce a crop in return for a “share” of that crop.

This practice allows the DNR to avoid owning and operating expensive equipment as well as committing its limited staff to time-consuming activities across broad geographic areas.

Mast

Fruit of trees and shrubs. Soft mast includes berries and hard mast includes nuts.

A Wisconsin Civil Service Announcement

The following salary and qualifications for two Conservation Biologist I positions and a Game Manager I position were posted on March 20, 1953:

A State Job Offers Promotional Opportunities, Annual Merit Increases, Three weeks Vacation, Sick Leave, Retirement System

Salary:

Start at \$270 a month (\$205 plus \$65 bonus)

Range:

\$205-\$250 plus the index-based cost-of-living bonus

Desirable Qualifications:

- Conservation Biologist (Aquatic)
- Courses in aquatic research or management
- Conservation Biologist (Game)
- Courses in wildlife management or related biological fields.

Game Manager I

- Major work in wildlife management. Two years of experience in game management may be substituted for not more than two years of college work.

Previous experience in related conservation activities would be particularly relevant to all of these positions. An examination will include the following parts: A written examination in early April to test job knowledge; an oral examination to test aptitude and suitability for these positions.

Game Manager Job Description

District game manager Don Holl introduced the public to his occupation in the January 1955 issue of the Conservation Bulletin. He noted that the game manager had just come on the scene about five years before; that date was actually the reorganization date. The game manager title was created in July 1945. About the game manager's role, Holl said, "One of his first assignments was to handle such complex and time-consuming tasks as public hunting grounds purchase, lease, and development. He soon became very much involved wherever public land could be managed for game production and also promoting wildlife on private land." Holl outlined the game manager's duties as follows:

- **Cooperation:** Ranging from pushing pencil to punching post-holes, the manager helps other agencies like the Soil Conservation Service, College of Agriculture, and others to improve stream banks and the landscape.
- **Extension service:** Helping the farmer grow another crop on their land... wildlife. The game manager's training in soils, agronomy, and plant ecology comes in handy when he works as the wildlife "county agent."
- **Refuges, public hunting grounds:** A routine part of the job deals with establishing and maintaining these two entities. The game manager makes appraisals, options and purchases land, leases other areas, makes boundary surveys, erects signs, and patrols the areas in hunting season.
- **Aquatic surveys:** Will muskrats prosper? Any waterfowl foods present? Are water levels stable enough for furbearers to flourish? Can an area be improved? How? The game manager must be able to provide a diagnosis and prescribe the remedy. But first he must determine the facts.
- **Big game surveys:** While some claim they know all about deer, game managers are bent on uncovering reliable, up-to-date information. They keep tab on the herd with surveys of *mast* production, browse production and use, and the annual fawn crop. Cruising deer yards during late winter obtains facts about the herd and its food supply. Days and miles of walking—much more strenuous than armchair speculation—but, the only way to bring out the truth!
- **Aerial surveys:** A game manager's district may cover as much as five counties. To round out the information on such matters as beaver populations, waterfowl numbers, deer concentrations, and game habitat losses over such a large area, he often takes to the air.
- **More surveys:** Car counts, bag checks, hunter interviews, and more. All the game manager's surveys are made for the same purpose—get the facts. Wildlife management is complex and will only be as good as the amount of sound information available.
- **Improving habitat:** Marsh drainage often destroys much good wildlife habitat. Restoring wetlands using earthen dams creates homes for mallards



and muskrats. Installing water control structures maintains water levels throughout large marsh areas insuring healthier growing conditions for wildlife.

- **Prescribed burning:** Wildfire is a menace, but controlled fire is a useful tool. A fire of 600 acres of worthless scrub oak and popple (aspen) can create 600 acres of valuable sharp-tailed grouse habitat.
- **Stocking game:** Game managers stock certain species to help meet the demands of heavy hunting pressure in populous sections in the state. Reasonably good habitat is essential.
- **Beaver damage control:** In populous areas, beaver dams may result in flood damage to crops, roads, and other property. The game manager investigates complaints and removes beaver and dams where necessary. The animals may be transferred to areas where they can live without causing trouble.
- **Farming operations:** Game managers often engage in large-scale farming. Hundreds of acres of farm crops are planted on major properties for food and cover diversity. In many cases, the game managers plan the job with local sharecroppers.
- **Education:** An informed, conservation-minded public is the most important factor in a successful game program. Game managers work with many groups to help them see the problems and the need for action.

The game manager job description inadvertently failed to mention regular cooperation with other functions, which was a priority for all WCD programs. Carrying law enforcement credentials was routine, and many game managers assisted their local warden in a variety of tasks from working deer shiners to license and bag checks. The amount of cooperation extended was dependent upon the game manager's interest level and varied greatly in the ranks. Those who produced regular citation opportunities for their local warden tended to be more respected by law enforcement personnel.

Game manager Cliff Germain, who carried warden credentials, made headlines in the fall of 1954 when he purposely entered a Plum Lake Township closed area in Vilas County with an uncased firearm, challenging the town's authority to regulate hunting seasons in Wisconsin. He was arrested for the apparent violation, but his appeal, backed by the WCD, was ruled on favorably later in the Circuit Court, substantiating that only the state had the authority to open and close seasons. That very important test case has been upheld through modern times. However, it should be noted that a legitimate public safety rationale may permit local authorities to prohibit firearms and bows from being used.

The Gamekeepers

End of an Era

The game program received an unanticipated setback when William Frederick Grimmer died of a heart attack on May 25, 1955. He had led the game program for 25 years, a rare, long term for a top-level bureaucrat. The Conservation Commission paid tribute to him with an article published in the *Conservation Bulletin*.

In tribute to Grimmer's 25 years at the helm of the game program and his exemplary list of accomplishments developing it, an annual W.F. Grimmer Award was created to honor "one Conservation Department employee who is outstanding for his major contributions in wildlife management."

The first Grimmer Award was given in 1956 to Harold Shine, a game manager who started his first permanent job as a laborer with the agency on October 1, 1928. He helped construct and operate the Fish Creek Experimental Game and Fur Farm as well as the 1934 operation at Poynette. He was the first of two game supervisors in 1947 and became the first district game manager at Green Bay in 1950. Others receiving the award later in the decade were researcher James Bell in 1957, Robert Wendt in 1958, and Stanley Plis in 1959. (Appendix H lists Grimmer Award recipients through 2006.)

Conservation Commission Tribute to Grimmer

Bill Grimmer was appointed superintendent of game management on August 1, 1930, as a result of a civil service examination for this position. His experience the previous four years with his private game farm at Delafield helped him rank first in this competition. The breeding of game birds for stocking in the wild was both an art and a science for him, and he became one of the nation's most able game breeders.

After experience with state game farms at Fish Creek and Moon Lake, he played a major role in the development of the State Experimental Game and Fur Farm at Poynette. His inauguration of electric brooders and incubators at this farm helped revolutionize wild game propagation and to develop this farm into the largest of its kind in the world.

Under the leadership of Bill Grimmer, the State Game Farm took first prize for "Best Game Pheasant" in the national game bird show at Philadelphia for each of the 13 years that Wisconsin participated between 1935 and 1950. Also each year, Wisconsin received first prizes on many individual species. He established one of the best collections of ornamental game birds in the United States for exhibit at the State Game Farm and was considered an authority on their habits and breeding technique. Many thousands of visitors benefited from the opportunity to see these birds.

In wildlife management on the land, Bill Grimmer was in on the development of all major development programs. New and progressive developments received his support with the interest of the wild animals always given foremost consideration. The restoration of Horicon Marsh and many other areas, the establishment of the public hunting grounds program, the use of new census techniques, and the encouragement of wildlife research all became realities under his leadership. His record for public service with seven different directors probably is a national record for this difficult position. To him must go much of the credit for the creation and effective use of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress as an advisory, educational, and public relations medium for setting effective conservation season regulations.

As a man, Bill Grimmer attained his greatest stature. He was a gentleman both by nature and by training at St. John's Military Academy. Those who worked with him always found him to be kind, patient, and congenial. His ability in public relations was outstanding to the point where it could be called diplomacy. He had respect for sincerity, tolerance for opposing opinions, and a dislike for controversy. When the occasion demanded, he would firmly stand up for what he believed to be the right. Since his birth on March 31, 1900, he has been an exemplary citizen of Wisconsin deserving of the Joint Resolution passed by the state Legislature and another resolution of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in his honor.



William Frederick Grimmer.

New Leadership

John Robert Smith, often referred to as “J.R.,” grew up in the hunting- and fishing-oriented north. He obtained his B.S. degree in wildlife management from the University of Minnesota in 1937. After earning his master’s degree in forestry at the University of Michigan in 1939, he was hired as a laborer by the WCD in 1940 at \$0.50 an hour wage. Smith’s rise through the ranks was rapid. A senior game aid in 1941, he became a junior game biologist assigned to the Horicon Marsh Development Project that August. He left the agency to serve in the army from August 1942 until his discharge in 1945.

He rejoined the WCD as a biologist for the Horicon Marsh Project in October 1945. He became chief of the Public Hunting and Fishing Grounds Section (previously known as Refuges and Public Hunting Grounds) in November 1947 and was promoted to assistant Game Management Division superintendent March 1, 1950. Following William Grimmer’s death in 1955, Smith was promoted again to become the new superintendent. Frank King became Smith’s assistant in 1956.

Under Grimmer, getting the new field organization off the ground had been a priority; Smith saw land acquisition as a critical, long-term management strategy. He championed the cause throughout his career. He was a quiet leader, but it was very clear he was in charge. While he was not very vocal, when he spoke, people listened. He established early administrative credibility with field personnel and earned a high level of respect from fellow administrators.

The new Game Management Division leader had a no-nonsense approach to doing business and had no patience for dilly-dally. A young game manager named Kent Klepinger learned this trait when he met with Smith a few years later. After Klepinger completed his verbal report, Smith turned his back on him and picked up a pair of binoculars. After a few minutes of silence and study of something through the window, Smith said, “I wonder how many rabbits are down there?” Klepinger knew the meeting was over.

General Work Activities. A June 27, 1956, memo from Smith to his area coordinators identified 37 separate work categories for wildlife management. By the end of the decade, core program work was similar, but bounties and fur stocking finally ended, and wildlife area acquisition, development, and maintenance were receiving increased emphasis. The following activities were highlighted in annual reports:

- Hunting areas leased and owned by the state
- Game food and cover developed
- Parking lot construction
- **Food patches** installed
- Access road construction
- Prescribed burn acreage
- Firebreak installation
- Flowage construction
- Clearing acreage
- Trails seeded
- Fence construction
- **Level ditching**

Division Reorganization

In July 1956, Smith announced organizational changes approved by the Conservation Commission. A new administrative assistant position was created to handle publications, captive wildlife licensing, regulations, and bird banding. The federal aid coordinator duties remained the same. The chief biologist remained in charge of area research coordination, but an ecologist position and a biometrician position were also created. The reorganization also established four group leaders for research:

Forest game – *Deer, ruffed grouse, prairie grouse, and beaver*

Wetland game – *Waterfowl and muskrats*

Farm game – *Pheasants, quail, squirrels, rabbits, etc.*

Pathology – *Disease investigations on any species in the state as necessity arises and specific research on approved disease or nutritional problems*

The area wildlife coordinator position was re-titled area supervisor. An assistant area supervisor title was created, and the five area biologists were appointed to that position. The Northwest and Northeast areas had forest habitat improvement



J.R. Smith was a quiet leader, but it was very clear he was in charge.

Food patches

Any agricultural or specialty crops planted specifically for wildlife food or as an attractant for wildlife.

Level ditching

Ditches constructed in wetlands with dragline equipment, usually for agricultural purposes. It is also a wetlands management technique DNR wildlife managers used in the past for increasing muskrat production and attracting waterfowl!

The Gamekeepers

positions added to their staff. The supervision of the State Game Farm was placed under the Southern Area. Crawford and Richland counties were removed from West Central Area jurisdiction and added to the Southern Area.

Smith announced a major publicity program for his division on May 22, 1957, by appointing a division publicity committee composed of John Keener, Harold Jordahl, and Ruth Hine. Dr. Hine was also appointed Game Management Division editor. Field personnel were assigned the task of notifying the committee of noteworthy items or submitting *Conservation Bulletin* articles, stories, observations, and illustrations to them for statewide publicity. They were also encouraged to send out local news releases directly to local newspapers and radio stations.

With expanding programs and increased responsibilities, statewide communications became more important than ever. Coordinating research projects and getting results passed on to the field were the first communication priorities of the Game Management Division. In a memorandum dated June 19, 1957, Smith established an annual meeting between area game biologists, research, and the division. He also authorized the five area biologists to meet periodically to stay in touch with each other and to stay informed about current research progress.

Another memo by Smith on November 18, 1957, scheduled a two-day meeting with all supervisory personnel with Game Manager 1 or Biologist 1 ratings, or above, to review major game management topics and provide an opportunity for new personnel to get acquainted. It was the first such meeting since the 1950 reorganization went into effect and would continue annually into the next decade. The Poynette Game Farm became the usual meeting site.

True to form in a bureaucracy, another reorganization of the Game Management Division staff occurred in May 1958. The positions and assigned responsibilities were as follows:

- **Federal aid coordinator (Harold Jordahl) and staff** – The federal aid coordinator's staff was returned to the central office. It consisted of the coordinator, an accountant, account clerk, one game manager, one fish management land appraiser, and one game management land appraiser who also coordinated game farms, fur farms, and shooting preserves.

Collateral duties for the staff included coordinating division tree and shrub orders and distribution; representing the division on the *Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP)*, Soil Bank Program, and related (agriculture) interagency programs; and reviewing and processing all divisional numbered orders (general letters).

- **Accountant (Francis Cramer)** – The accountant was primarily responsible for federal aid reimbursement duties and also supervised the account clerk. The position also acted as an assistant to the federal aid coordinator on federal aid matters.
- **Game management land appraiser (Bill Field)** – The game management land appraiser worked primarily on game management land acquisition but also expedited matters relating to fur and game farms and shooting preserves in conjunction with the game manager on the federal aid staff.
- **Fish management land appraiser (vacant at the time of the 1958 reorganization)** – This position worked primarily on fish management land acquisition.
- **Game manager (Norval Barger)** – This was a “catch all” position. This person handled specific assignments on division land acquisition; prepared and processed school tax payments (formula based on the amount of game lands owned in each school district); and prepared news releases, county and state maps, and state project brochures.

The position was also responsible for expediting and processing permits for game farms, fur farms, shooting preserves, roadside exhibits, zoos, scientific certificates, banding permits, state hatchery bird control permits, and the like. The position acted as a clearinghouse for all banding records and returns.

Agricultural Conservation Program (ACP)

A conservation program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service offering cost-sharing to landowners to implement various conservation practices on their land. Such conservation activities applied to the land are commonly called “ACP practices.”

- **Administrative assistant (John Keener)** – The administrative assistant was primarily in charge of *Administrative Code* drafting activities (i.e. regulations). Responsibilities included annual changes to hunting and trapping regulations, closed areas, and refuges and miscellaneous regulations including spring public hearing (Conservation Congress) proposals. The position supervised one game manager and a statistical clerk.
- **Big Game supervisor (new title; vacant)** – John Keener performed these duties for a while because of budget constraints. The new position would not be filled until 1962 when Art Doll was promoted from Black River Falls. Its major responsibility was coordination of the statewide deer program. Other duties included the extension trapping program, coordination of surveys and census data, and liaison with a committee composed of the five area biologists.
- **Game manager (Otis Bersing)** – The second game manager on staff supervised the statistical clerk and had the primary responsibility of assembling division reports including the tabulation and reporting of deer registration results, annual game harvest and trapper reports, administrative processing of Horicon managed hunt reservations, annual statistical reports, and division sign requirements for posting state game lands.

The total number of full-time Game Management Division employees reached 80 by 1959, which included administrative staff, federal aid staff, supervisors, biologists, habitat development leaders, 43 game managers, and 18 wildlife researchers (Appendix I). Despite its accomplishments, the new profession was still struggling to be recognized. Conservation wardens still resisted acknowledging game manager expertise, and the public was generally ignorant of their function in the WCD.

Game Farm Operations

William A. Ozburn supervised the State Experimental Game and Fur Farm through most of the decade until his retirement in 1959. Norbert “Nibs” Damaske, formerly the game manager at Wautoma, replaced Ozburn. The support staff of 55 laborers and seasonal aids was reduced to 30 by 1960 because of increased efficiency at the game farm and to enable expansion of game management positions statewide.

The game farm acted as a clearinghouse for confiscated game from all over the state. Most of the animals were either retained for public display in the year-round wildlife exhibit on the game farm grounds or were disposed of by sale, exchange, or gift to other licensed facilities. The wildlife exhibit displayed many of Wisconsin’s birds and animals and remained a popular tourist attraction.

A pathologist was still on staff to advise the game farm of animal care, assist in various experiments to improve production, provide veterinary care, perform necropsies on deceased animals, and test various chemicals and feeds impacting wildlife. He also provided, without cost, services to other state functions and to private fur and game breeders.

Several of the permanent staff specialized in various aspects of pheasant rearing, including pheasant biology, breeding principles, egg handling, sanitation, and facilities maintenance. These individuals also provided technical advice to private operations about proper housing, feeding, breeding, sanitation, and disease control for pheasants and other game.

The game farm staff focused most of its attention on producing enough pheasants to stock the increasing number of public hunting grounds. Raccoon stocking was still occurring, but stocking rates tapered off as wild populations increased:

1950-51 – 1,110	1952-53 – 190	1954-55 – 37
1951-52 – 164	1953-54 – 194	1955-56 – 180

Funding for this activity shifted from hunting and trapping license revenue to a \$.25 “occupational tax per animal” funded by the Wisconsin Raccoon and Fox Hunters Association. Program funds were also generated by the sale of raccoon tags. The program was terminated in 1956.

Wisconsin

Administrative Code

State-created regulations or rules established within the authority of enabling state statutes (legislatively created law). DNR-generated rules are enforced by state conservation wardens. All such rules are reviewed and approved by the legislative Clearinghouse and a special legislative committee before they are published and become effective.

The Gamekeepers

Table 13. Milwaukee County capture and release program, 1950–1956.

Animal	1950–51	1951–52	1952–53	1953–54	1954–55	1955–56
Rabbit	42	304	48	126	37	197
Squirrel	23	74	32	0	180	203
Pheasant	478	32	190	0	0	28

Game farm personnel continued the capture and release of cottontail rabbits, squirrels, and pheasants in Milwaukee County (Table 13) that had started in the winter of 1945–46. This unusual activity was believed to be warranted because, at a time when game farm personnel were available, it reduced damage complaints in the county and bolstered populations elsewhere. The practice ended after 1956.

Strategies for pheasant egg production and raising birds for release had changed from building a wild population to providing short-term hunting benefits in the fall. However, band returns analyzed in 1949 and 1950 indicated that between 51% and 65% of roosters bagged in the fall were game farm stocks. Further, despite leasing and purchasing more public land, game managers were reporting pheasant habitat losses as agriculture and rural development continued to expand.

The day-old-chick program continued to be popular but peaked in 1958 when over 190,000 chicks were distributed to over 200 participating sportsmen clubs. About 33,000 adult birds, fully feathered at 22 to 30 weeks old, were released annually on lands owned or leased by the state in the later half of the 1950s. An estimated 400,000 sportsmen hunted pheasants in Wisconsin during this period, and license sales were increasing each year.

Public Hunting Grounds

The Public Hunting Grounds (PHG) Section was a priority program for the Game Management Division and had been led by J.R. Smith prior to his advancement to division leader. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service real estate specialists appraised all of the tracts within a project boundary at the same time. District game managers, their assistants, and conservation aids did the negotiations and land buying (six-month offers-to-purchase options) while Smith made sure that this workload was always accommodated.

The *Refuges and Public Hunting and Fishing Grounds Section Manual* still guided the program and was updated at periodic intervals. Experience accumulated in the field by game managers, especially involving land negotiations and optioning procedures, resulted in a steady flow of new guidelines to keep the participants up to date on the best operating techniques.

The growth of the PHG program continued to be spectacular. At the beginning of the decade, there were 105 public hunting grounds that covered almost 300,000 acres of land owned or leased by the state. By 1960, the program had grown to 256 public hunting grounds totaling more than 500,000 acres. Additionally, some 4.5 million acres were open to public hunting and fishing on national, state, and county forests, Forest Crop Law lands, and property owned by the Wisconsin Land Commission.

Enhancing lands owned and leased by the state was also a division priority. Game managers devoted significant time to providing free trees and shrubs to public hunting grounds landowners and improving habitat on state-owned wildlife areas. Trees and shrubs along with food patches were used on state-owned upland areas and *low-head dikes*. Flowages and level ditching were created in wetland areas.

A shrub promoted by the WCD would later raise havoc with farmers and draw public criticism for 50 years. In 1951, multiflora rose seedlings became available from the Griffith State Nursery at Wisconsin Rapids. The newly created nursery at Boscobel followed suit in 1952. Because this dense shrub grew rapidly and provided quick results, game managers promoted the multi-flora rose as great hedgerow cover for wildlife. It soon became popular with landowners within public hunting grounds because it was free and often WCD work crews would do the planting work. Millions of these prolific, exotic shrubs were planted each year for the next 20 years before people realized it was a fierce invader and unwanted habitat competitor.

Low-head dike

An earthen structure installed to impede the flow of water and designed to hold back a shallow water area usually six feet or less in depth.

Game Research

Eight game research projects, most ongoing from the 1940s, were completed or close to completion in the early years of the decade: (1) ruffed grouse, (2) Capercaillie-black grouse, (3) waterfowl, (4) fox, (5) deer, (6) pheasant stocking, (7) muskrat growth and development, and (8) level ditching for muskrats. A new series of *Conservation Bulletin* articles entitled “Wisconsin Wildlife” was initiated in 1951 to report these new research findings to the public on a regular basis.

Fox Research

Technical Bulletin 6, *Wisconsin Fox Populations*, by Steven Richards and Ruth Hine, was published in 1953. Data collected from 1946 to 1950 showed no significant effect of fox predation on a variety of prey species. Rabbit, squirrel, and ruffed grouse populations increased despite high fox populations. Fox impacts on pheasants were not studied.

Wildlife researchers collected more than 2,000 red and gray fox stomachs between 1955 and 1964 from hunters and trappers in 30 counties to study winter food habits. Small mammals, mostly mice, were found most frequently in stomach contents (53% of the stomachs), and cottontail rabbits were a close second (46% of the stomachs). However, game birds were found only in 9% of the stomachs, suggesting that the influence of fox predation on grouse and pheasant populations in winter was not significant.

Muskrat Research

The 1940s experimentation with muskrats at Horicon Marsh by Harold Mathiak and Arlyn Linde produced their first publication in 1954, *Role of Refuges in Muskrat Management* (Technical Bulletin 10). Their findings revealed biological and management detail about this furbearer that greatly improved wetland management strategy. It was the last comprehensive research of muskrats in the century.

Ring-necked Pheasant Research

Pheasant research was still ongoing. Pure strain pheasants were obtained from the wild in Hawaii and incorporated into the breeding stock at the Poynette Game Farm sometime in the early 1950s. Versicolor pheasants were also imported from Japan during this period. Hybrid offspring from this experiment were released in the marginal range of Calumet, Iron, and Marathon counties but didn't survive very long.

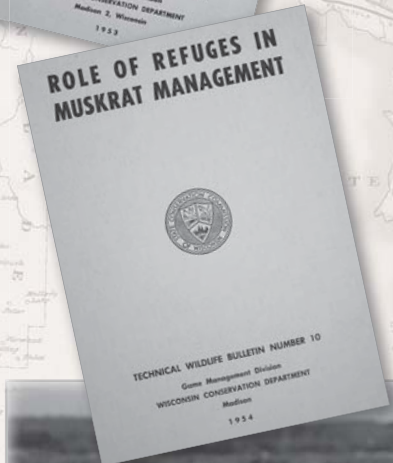
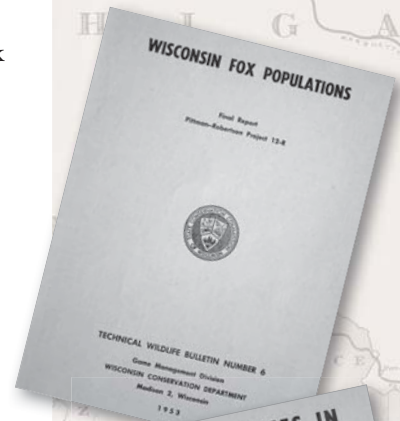
Evaluation of Stocking of Breeder Hen and Immature Cock Pheasants on Wisconsin Public Hunting Grounds (Technical Bulletin 11), by Cyril Kabat, Frank M. Kozlik, Donald R. Thompson, and Frederic H. Wagner, was published in 1955. Cyril Kabat, R.K. Meyer, Kenneth Flakas, and Ruth Hine wrote *Seasonal Variation in Stress Resistance and Survival in the Hen Pheasant* (Technical Bulletin 13) in 1956.

In the late 1950s, biologists Carroll Besadny and Fred Wagner initiated a study of the Poynette Game Farm's day-old-chick program. The pheasant research objective was to determine the survival rate of the birds and to document their contribution to the wild pheasant population. Wagner's investigations revealed core information about the bird's habits and habitat needs for the first time and greatly assisted game management (Wagner left the agency for a teaching post at Utah State).

Harry Stanz completed an eight-year study of hybrid pheasants that Cyril Kabat thought might match the success of hybrid corn. It didn't. Researchers Gene Woehler and Carroll Besadny released the offspring from a series of inter-specific hybrids in Calumet, Iowa, and Marathon counties, but that's where the effort ended.

Wildlife Surveys

Researchers developed the techniques for surveying wildlife in the state, but game managers conducted the surveys. A “Game and Range Survey” project was created for time reporting records about 1956 that proved very popular with game managers, and the surveys were conducted for the next 20 years. They were the type of activities managers thoroughly enjoyed, and the knowledge gained tended to define their expertise.



DNR FILE



The Gamekeepers

The surveys included the following:

- Ruffed grouse winter flush and spring drumming counts
- Prairie grouse dancing ground counts
- Pheasant crowing counts, quail whistling counts
- Mourning dove and woodcock audio transects
- Grouse and pheasant brood observations
- Winter muskrat house counts
- Mast and berry observations
- Hayfield cutting and standing corn reporting
- Rural mail-carrier Hungarian partridge census
- Muskrat pelt harvest
- Trapper questionnaires

Waterfowl Research

A wood duck banding project was recommended in 1957 for all 14 states in the Mississippi Flyway in recognition of drastic declines observed in parts of its range. The information was needed to further define wood duck range as well as to obtain sex and age ratios, hunting mortality, migration routes, and wintering ground locations. Additionally, a special weekly waterfowl report was established to document fall use, water levels, and harvest. This information provided valuable information to biologists and hunters for the next 25 years.

Research personnel captured, banded, and released 2,000 eight-week-old game farm mallards annually on several statewide sites. Data obtained from band returns showed that most were shot early in the season on the release site, and few survived to return and nest. The study results swayed sportsmen to remove their support for this practice and prevented Jack Frost, the largest game farm breeder in the United States, from stocking federal refuges with his birds.

Canada goose numbers in the Mississippi Valley Population began to increase in the 1950s and offered more hunting opportunity in Wisconsin. The goose buildup at Horicon Marsh and a dozen river and wetland basins north of the area stimulated the WCD to purchase several new projects for that purpose. Large lakes, two large prison farms, and several large private farms provided refuge-like conditions for the geese, delayed migration, and even held birds over the winter. Research efforts concentrated on banding and surveys as well as assisting game managers to deal with new Canada goose management problems.

Laurence Jahn resigned his waterfowl research position at Horicon in September 1959 to work for the Wildlife Management Institute in Washington, D.C., and Dick Hunt assumed the chief waterfowl biologist position.

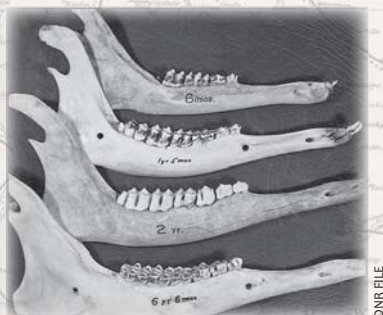
Research and Management Implications

In 1958, researchers Donald R. Thompson and Bill Creed along with forest game research supervisor Art Doll developed an innovative summer “fawn per doe” survey that not only provided an excellent measure of herd health but also provided a vital link to a system developed later by Creed that would greatly improve deer population projection capabilities. Creed initiated deer aging techniques that enabled game managers to collect deer ages in a number of *management units* for the first time in time for the 1959 hunting season. The fawn per doe ratios and deer aging data would soon be melded with other research innovations and elevate Wisconsin to the top of the deer management programs in the United States.

Research continued to be a very practical management tool in Wisconsin. J.R. Smith demonstrated this fact quite nicely when he reported this impressive list of research results to Secretary Voigt in 1959:

- Many game and fur species can stand an increased harvest of surplus birds and animals (and hence provide more recreational opportunity) without depleting populations.

Management units
Geographic areas of varying
size, usually within certain road
boundaries, used to manage
wildlife populations.



Biologists age deer by observing
tooth wear.

- Deer and snowshoe hare damage to forest reproduction must be counteracted if a sound forest management program is to be conducted.
- Artificial deer feeding on a statewide basis is ineffective and prohibitively expensive.
- Predator control for protecting deer is unnecessary; hence, bounties on wolves, coyotes, bobcats, and lynx are not needed.
- Suggestions for managed goose hunting at Horicon have provided equitable distribution of harvest, minimum commercialization of shooting, and made land purchases for hunting adjacent to the marsh unnecessary.
- Stocking mallards before hunting seasons is a poor method of increasing breeding mallard populations because few birds survive.
- Level ditching in marshes greatly increases muskrat and waterfowl populations.
- Muskrat refuges do not increase muskrat populations in surrounding areas and result in the loss of the fur values that might have been gained had the refuge been trapped.
- Beaver ponds are important waterfowl production areas, and their maintenance for this purpose is desirable.
- Beaver live-trapped on damage complaints should be released on potholes to reduce recurring complaints.
- Otter in Wisconsin do not harm trout or other game fish populations, so “otter control” is not necessary.
- Surveys of existing wetlands and prior wetland losses determined the urgency of a wetland acquisition program to maintain wildlife areas.
- Evaluations of pheasant stocking resulted in techniques for streamlining game farm operations and stocking success.
- Stocking quail in most state areas where there are no quail will not establish populations.
- Ruffed grouse and sharp-tailed grouse hunting seasons can be opened each year, regardless of the stage of the population cycle.
- Techniques to maintain or increase ruffed grouse numbers include underplanting aspen with conifers, protection of ironwood for its winter food values, maintenance of alder for summer brood use, perpetuation of forest openings, light grazing of off-site aspen by livestock, and group-selection cutting of oak to promote growth for winter cover.
- Prairie chickens can be successfully managed without extensive land purchases by maintaining scattered, small blocks of land in grass and winter food patches.
- Although deer carry several diseases (such as leptospirosis) affecting domestic cattle, no evidence has been found that deer are spreading diseases to cattle.
- Leucocytozoon disease limits duck production in northern Wisconsin and makes reanalysis of management objectives necessary.
- A game-kill questionnaire system can obtain faster and more accurate harvest data than hunter report cards.

Habitat Development Projects

As more land was acquired by the state, habitat improvement projects naturally increased. This type of project was eligible for federal Pittman-Robertson (P-R) funds, and these funds stimulated further expansion of this type of land development. About 10% of the total P-R budget was committed to development primarily to enhance wildlife food and cover. The 1949–50 P-R allotment was around \$254,000, and the 1959–60 fund increased to \$331,000.

Because controlling water levels was essential to the development of Horicon Marsh, a gauging station was installed in 1950 along with a *weir* device to limit the migration of carp into the system.



Measuring water levels at Horicon Marsh.

Weir

An obstruction placed in a stream or river channel to divert water and trap fish.

The dragline enabled managers to improve wetlands for many wildlife species.

Waterfowl impoundment
Any artificial water containment area, usually created by the installation of a water control structure and an earthen dike and intended for waterfowl production.



COURTESY OF DNR CREX MEADOWS

Level ditching had been discovered to be beneficial to muskrat production in the 1940s, and three 10-acre units and one 5-acre unit were initially installed at Horicon in 1948. After blasting with ammonium nitrate proved more costly and less efficient than dragline installations, an 11-mile objective was established, and work began in earnest in 1950 to continue the project. About 7-1/2 miles of level ditching was completed at a cost of about \$10,000 by 1952.

Other development projects initiated in the early to mid-1950s reflected the acceleration in habitat improvement efforts. Projects at Yellowstone Wildlife Area, Ackley Wildlife Area, Buena Vista Marsh, and Rock Prairie included fencing, weed control, and planting trees and shrubs to improve wildlife habitat. A dam installation on the Yellowstone River and **waterfowl impoundment** projects at Crex Meadows, Brownstown, Wood County, and Little Rice wildlife areas accomplished the same objectives.

Statistics summarizing development accomplishments indicated how large the workload had become. Workload for the 1959 and 1960 work seasons included the following:

- Over 200 miles of new fencing
- 2,707 acres of food patches
- 650 miles of trails seeded
- 16,827 acres of prescribed burns
- 62 miles of new firebreaks
- 24 new flowages on 3,360 acres
- 3,633 acres of wildlife openings
- 155 miles of access roads
- 160 new parking lots
- Ten miles of level ditching

Maintenance Projects

The property maintenance overhead increased proportionally with state ownership and development acreages throughout the 1950s. Large state-owned wildlife areas like Horicon Marsh, Crex Meadows, the Central Wisconsin Conservation Area, and Wood County exhausted the operational budget earlier each fiscal year and needed additional funding. While maintenance projects normally were not eligible for P-R funding, some exceptions occurred. Since most of the Horicon Marsh Development Project was considered complete, an unusual Horicon Marsh Maintenance Project was approved as a Pittman-Robertson-funded effort in 1949–50 and continued through 1953. The maintenance activities included fencing, brush control, prescribed burning, building repairs, and a muskrat share-trapping program (initiated in 1944 and involving selling trapping compartments by sealed bid).

The precedent-setting Horicon Marsh Maintenance Project initially was expanded to the Rock County Wildlife Habitat Project in 1951 and to Meadow Valley, the Central Wisconsin Conservation Area, and Crex Meadows in 1953. Eventually, Pittman-Robertson money funded maintenance projects statewide and included such activities as the repair and operation of water control structures, prescribed burning, land leasing, road repairs, building maintenance, equipment maintenance, and administrative facility maintenance.

Deer Program Expansion

Expanding deer populations and the popularity of deer hunting continued to occupy much research and management attention during the decade.

1950 Season

Having convinced the public that heavy harvest was necessary, the 1950 gun deer season allowed any deer to be killed over a seven-day framework. Shooting hours started at 8 a.m. on opening day only, and Chambers Island was opened to deer hunting for the first time since 1913. Deer tag sales topped 312,000, and the kill was estimated at 167,911 deer.

1951 Season

The 1951 season followed the same framework as the previous year. For the first time, separate licenses were required for resident small game and deer hunting. Deer hunters were now required to purchase a separate deer tag (\$2.50), a requirement that continued until 1956. Orange clothing was legalized for the first time along with the traditional red clothing. Deer tag sales slipped to 296,795, and the estimated gun kill was 129,475.

The combined 1949–51 deer seasons accounted for almost 500,000 deer killed and were quickly referred to as the “blood and guts” seasons. It served as an educational experience for more progressive sportsmen who learned that an any-deer harvest should be a normal part of the deer season framework. On the other hand, many skeptics remained buck oriented and convinced that the 1949–51 seasons were a slaughter that almost wiped out the herd.

1952 Season

The Conservation Congress represented hunter’s skepticism quite well. Its delegates were very vocal about their opinions—they simply didn’t believe the harvest figures. The kill total was from voluntary hunter reporting known to be far from exact. The 1952 gun deer season found the overharvest concerns of a doubting public influencing the return to the old conservative buck-only framework: a seven-day forked-antler restriction that November. Only 27,504 deer were killed.

Deer Registration. In 1952, conservation warden Chauncy Weitz, district game supervisor Stan DeBoer, and deer research project leader Burt Dahlberg visited Colorado and Utah to learn about their deer programs. Discussions with various biologists and wardens convinced them that controlled hunts, herd reduction, and harvest registration were needed in Wisconsin. Their endorsement led to establishing a system of mandatory deer registration in 1953.



Wardens were in charge of deer registration from 1953 through 1958.



The Gamekeepers

1953–1954 Seasons

The 1953 deer season was the same season framework as the previous year. Deer tag sales topped 192,000, but only 19,823 deer were killed during the gun season. When the same season was repeated in 1954, it was clear from the volume of complaint letters that there wasn't much optimism about herd recovery. The only encouraging note was that 55 counties were open to deer hunting (the most since 1906 and 1951), but only 24,698 deer were registered during the gun season.

Management Unit Concept. John Keener met with a group of biologists in early 1954 and created a map that defined deer management units for the first time in the program's history. While the concept was discussed with the Conservation Commission in 1955, it was not formally implemented until General Letter – Game No. 132 was sent to all game management personnel on October 29, 1957.

1955 Season

Even the department got caught up with the overharvest fear in 1955 because the staff and the Conservation Congress sought only a spike-buck season for spike bucks with antlers three inches or greater in length. The commission approved a nine-day forked-antler framework with a special four-day either-sex season for Buffalo, Dunn, La Crosse, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau, and St. Croix counties (Mississippi River Zone). Another ten counties joined in the hunt, and 35,060 deer were registered during the gun deer season.

Deer Pellet Surveys. Experimental deer pellet count surveys were tried in Wisconsin for the first time after snowfall in 1955. It was the first quantitative measure of the deer population developed in the state. It had been used in western states for estimating sheep grazing on public lands. Later, it showed promise for deer when biologists used it to estimate mule deer use of winter range. Michigan was the first to modify the technique for measuring deer winter use. This simple technique proved reasonably accurate and became a standard census method for the next 20 years.



Deer pellet surveys began in the 1950s.

1956 Deer Study

The Conservation Commission appointed a deer committee in January 1956 composed of ten WCD personnel and four U.S. Forest Service representatives to study deer herd management options and recommend strategies for addressing problem areas. They reported the results in September, emphasizing that the herd should not be “unduly damaging” to forest and agricultural crops and that hunters must be assured of a maximum sustained yield of high quality deer. The report indicated that the deer herd was again at a danger point and required stepped-up habitat management along with more liberal hunting regulations.

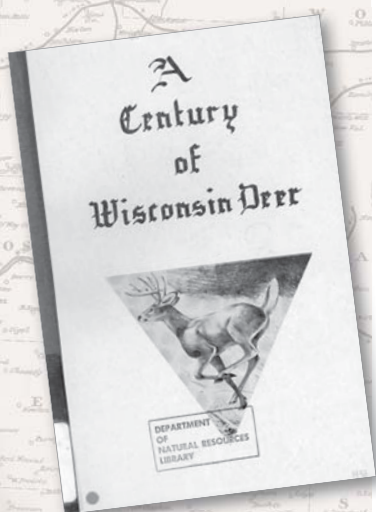
1956 Season

Despite unanimously accepting the deer committee report, most Conservation Commission members felt that the slow deer herd recovery warranted continuing the buck-only framework. Because spike bucks were thought to reflect inferior breeding stock and were being reported more frequently, the fall 1956 nine-day forked-antler buck season was liberalized to include spikes with antlers not less than three inches in length. Over 7,000 spike bucks were registered out of a total of 35,562 gun deer registrations.

Game manager and historian Otis Bersing completed and the WCD published *A Century of Wisconsin Deer* in 1956. The book was a first-of-its-kind summary of deer season history that included an incredible amount of detailed notes about historical happenings in the deer program. It documented regulation changes, violations, accidents, policy, illegal kill, closed areas, deer feeding, deer damage, and numerous yearly harvest records.

1957 Season

A vitally important deer season breakthrough occurred in 1957. Struggling with finding some sort of way to harvest a limited number of antlerless deer without having to



repeat the “blood and guts” risk fostered by uncontrollable either-sex seasons, conservation commissioner Leonard J. Seyberth came up with the idea of issuing one harvest permit per hunting party of four that would be valid for taking one deer of either sex (an idea probably taken from Michigan where camp deer had been legal since 1921). Quickly entitled “party permit” or “camp deer,” the new permit increased the gun harvest to a surprising 68,138 deer in 1957.

Almost immediately, concerns were expressed about problems with the new system. Most significantly, the department couldn’t control the distribution of the permits. The agency still didn’t have the statutory authority (i.e. a law passed by the Legislature) to control hunter numbers or distribution. Further, while hunters could kill a deer of any age or sex under the party permit, they tended to kill bucks because of the long hunting tradition. It also was discovered that hunters and non-hunters commonly applied for party permits they did not intend to use simply to prevent others from shooting does.

1958–1959 Seasons

Despite problems, a very liberal 16-day spike-buck and party permit season was established north of U.S. Highway 8 in 1958 and 1959 coupled with a nine-day spike-buck season with party permits for most of the remainder of the state. The Mississippi River Zone was split using an odd three-day either-sex season followed by a six-day spike-buck framework for both years because local hunters thought it was the fairest and most effective framework. The 1958 harvest was 95,234 deer.

Management Unit Registration. Two different opening dates for the north and south seasons in 1959 increased hunting pressure and created workload problems for WCD personnel. For the first time, deer registration procedures required the recording of kill by management unit and township. The deer kill was an impressive 105,596 in 1959. As usual, cries of overharvest were heard statewide.

1960 Season

A record 70 counties were open for gun deer hunting in 1960. Green and Racine counties joined in for the first time since 1906. The season framework was as follows:

- Three-day either-sex season in Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine, Walworth, and Waukesha counties
- Two-day either-sex season followed by a seven-day spike-buck season for the Mississippi River Zone
- Nine-day spike-buck season with party permit north of State Highway 29
- Nine-day spike-buck season south of State Highway 29

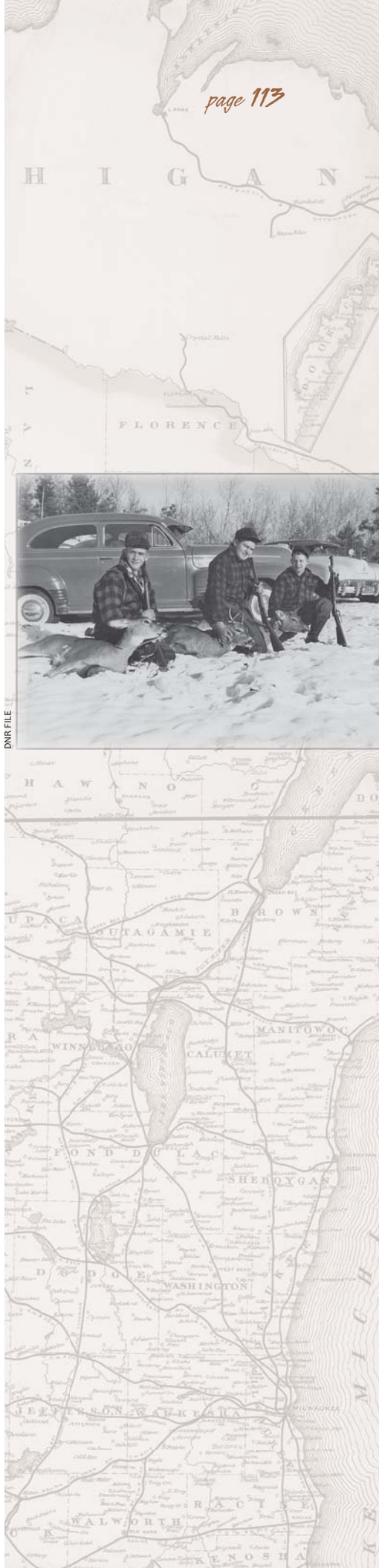
Deer tag sales exceeded 338,000, but the 1960 statewide harvest fell to 61,005. Complaints of overharvest, poor hunter distribution, dead deer left in the woods, and lack of confidence in the party permit poured into the agency. Legislators relayed similar complaints from their constituency, and threats of a party permit law restriction were heard from the state capital.

Archery Season

Bow deer hunting continued to grow in popularity during the 1950s. The 1950 hunt ran for 45 days, and about 12,000 archers killed 383 deer. The 1960 hunt was 89 days in length, and about 25,000 archers killed 1,091 deer and 50 bears.

Car-Deer Collisions

Car-killed deer were not much of a problem in the state at the start of the decade, with only 448 dead deer picked up by wardens in 1951, but the number more than doubled by 1954. When it passed 2,000 deer in 1956, law enforcement and game managers were taking notice. By 1960, more than 3,000 car-kills were recovered from Wisconsin highways with the trend following increases in both the deer herd and vehicle traffic volume.



The Gamekeepers

Deer Program Administration

An important deer program transition of historic significance occurred in 1959. The Law Enforcement Division had been “in charge” of the deer program because of its regulatory nature. However, the advancing technology from research and the increasing administrative burden of deer registration led the chief warden to turn the program over to the Game Management Division after the 1958 season.

The 1950s marked a jumping off point for the game management profession entering a new, more technically advanced period. Other states began to pay attention to how Wisconsin was managing its deer herd.

The combination of deer registration and party permit harvest techniques along with deer research innovations during this decade attracted considerable media attention. The 1950s marked a jumping off point for the game management profession entering a new, more technically advanced period. Other states began to pay attention to how Wisconsin was managing its deer herd.

Other Game Programs

The Game Management Division continued to administer a number of programs described earlier, but some would end during the decade.

Black Bear

Hunting black bears with firearms was slowly increasing. The bear hunting season ran concurrently with the gun deer season, but few sportsmen specifically hunted for bears. The first registered gun harvest in 1956 accounted for 140 black bears. The bear harvest from 1956 through 1960 is summarized as follows:

1956 – 140	1958 – 530	1960 – 625 (state record)
1957 – 314	1959 – 532	

Bounties

Bounties were still paid by the state. The 1949–50 tallies showed harvests of 482 wildcats (bobcat) and lynx, 3,135 coyotes and wolves, 6,489 gray foxes, and 21,955 red foxes, costing \$127,285 in bounty payments. The highest total of animals ever bountied in the state occurred in the 1954–55 season when more than 41,000 bounties were recorded at a cost of \$144,000.

The wolf and Canada lynx finally became *protected species* in 1957, perhaps providing the impetus for ending all WCD-financed bounties on July 1, 1957. Counties used their own funds to continue bounties well after that time period. A summary of the program showed the following highlights:

- Bounties have been paid off and on for over 100 years.
- No fox bounty was paid from 1883 to 1917 or 1931 to 1945.
- Red fox stocking occurred in 17 counties from 1935 through 1943.
- State bounty costs from 1900 to 1957 were about \$3 million.
- State bounty costs from 1946 to 1957 were nearly \$1.5 million.
- Bounty payments from the Conservation Fund accounted for one-half the total payments each year and averaged about \$50,000 in recent years.

Wildlife Damage

Deer and black bear damage complaints also required annual expenditures, and beginning July 1, 1949, \$40,000 was allotted for this purpose by law. If the total number of claims exceeded that amount, each claim received a prorated share of the total. About 200 deer damage complaints and from 30 to 80 bear damage complaints were processed each year through the decade, except in Fiscal Year 1958–59 when 208 bear damage complaints were filed.



*Protected species
Any plant or animal species
protected by a closed season.*

Captive Wildlife

The Game Management Division endorsed the habitat protection and hunting that captive wildlife establishments provided as being “in the public’s interest,” and captive wildlife licensing continued as a priority Game Management Division function throughout the 1950s. About 25 fur farms, 50 deer farms, 70 shooting preserves, and over 300 game farms were licensed annually. Shooting preserves alone accounted for more than 38,000 acres of habitat in the early 1950s.

By the end of the decade, each *captive wildlife program* had increased; 1959 records showed 234 fur farms, 122 deer farms, 88 shooting preserves, and almost 900 game farms. Muskrat farms (separate from fur farms) added over 350 licenses and 50,000 acres to bring the affected habitat total to about 100,000 acres.

Refuges

Wildlife and game refuges were still considered vital to the game program. In 1950, there were 136 refuges totaling over 54,000 acres. An additional 100,000 acres of seasonal closed areas were also established, primarily to protect deer. By 1960, refuges had declined to 105, covering about 28,000 acres, and closed areas declined to less than 80,000 acres.

Artificial Feeding

Winter feeding also continued as a program staple for providing emergency food for game birds and deer. State law segregated \$0.50 of each deer hunting license sold to be used exclusively to purchase and distribute winter deer feed and purchase deer yards. During the 1950–51 winter, about 2,000 acres of deer yards were purchased, and 1,131 tons of hay and deer concentrate were used at a cost of about \$50,000, an all-time WCD record. Emergency browse cutting efforts were initiated for the first time that winter as a cost-efficient way to get natural food to deer when they needed it the most. Winter feeding for deer and the special deer yard funding were terminated in 1953.

Wardens and game managers coordinated the distribution of over 88 tons of corn and almost a ton of grit to sportsmen in 50 counties that were cooperating in the winter bird feeding program during the 1950–51 winter. However, participation was dwindling, and only 1,285 numbered stations were active the following winter. The program continued at a similar rate until the 1959–60 winter when more than 100 tons of corn was used. However, with new budget restrictions and research findings that showed the detrimental effects of artificial feeding on wildlife, the artificial feeding program ended in 1960 as game managers turned to food patches and emergency browse cutting to fill this management objective.

Controlled Hunting

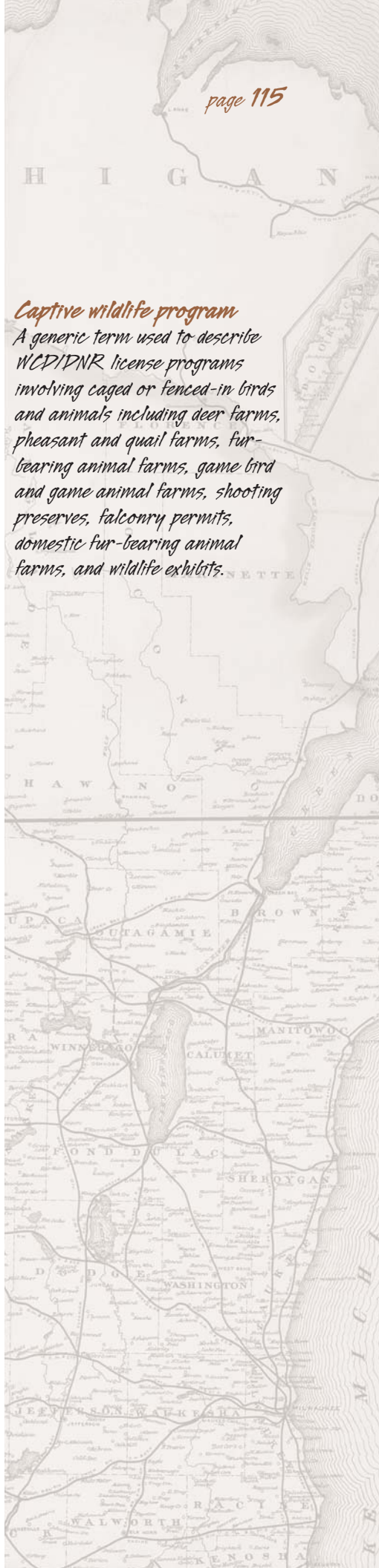
Controlled hunting surfaced as an area of interest in the fall of 1953, probably because of the earlier Necedah National Wildlife Refuge deer hunting experiment. An undesirable type of hunting pressure was occurring at Horicon Marsh. Hunters lined up on the edge of the federal refuge to ambush Canada geese leaving the refuge. These “firing lines” stimulated intense competition that fostered long range shooting, increased crippling of geese, and resulted in vehement arguments over dead birds. Offering quality hunting in blinds located well apart from each other could eliminate this problem.

In cooperation with the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin game managers and waterfowl researchers set up 114 blinds with 200-yard spacing on a 440-yard strip of uplands adjoining the refuge. Hunters applied for permits to use the blinds, and interest was keen even in the waiting lines while hunters watched others shoot geese. While only 655 geese were killed over a 55-day season, hunters reported a favorable experience, and the system continued into the 1960s.

Geese numbers peaked during the decade at 77,500 in 1959. Horicon Marsh state and federal areas together with the new state wildlife areas of Eldorado, Grand River Marsh, Pine Island, and Theresa Marsh were effectively “short-stopping” geese for longer periods, which allowed increasing numbers of hunters to kill Canada geese. This trend was upsetting southern Mississippi Flyway states and increased Wisconsin’s harvest to the point that early hunting season closure had to be put in place in 1958 and 1959.

Captive wildlife program

A generic term used to describe WCD/DNR license programs involving caged or fenced-in birds and animals including deer farms, pheasant and quail farms, fur-bearing animal farms, game bird and game animal farms, shooting preserves, falconry permits, domestic fur-bearing animal farms, and wildlife exhibits.



The Gamekeepers

Furbearer Reintroductions

At the urging of conservation commissioner A.W. Schorger, who was then teaching wildlife management at the University of Wisconsin, the department obtained five American (pine) martens from Montana on November 19, 1953, in exchange for wall-eyed pike eggs. The martens were released on Stockton Island in Lake Superior. Five additional martens were released in 1956, but annual surveys indicated poor survival.

A conversation between Schorger and Cyril Kabat in September 1955 resulted in an exchange of wild fishers from New York for some Wisconsin quail. Ten wild fishers were trapped in the Adirondacks, flown directly from New York to Rhinelander, and released in Nicolet National Forest in northeastern Wisconsin. Shortly thereafter, 20 wild-trapped fishers from Minnesota were released in the same area. Later surveys indicated that survival and dispersal was good, and the experiment was judged to be successful.

Muskrat Trapping

The experimental share-trapping program initiated at Horicon Marsh was now institutionalized as a method for maintaining open water areas for waterfowl and for generating income. The season length varied from 39 to 188 days for up to 56 trapping units during the decade. Spring trapping was introduced during the 1951–52 season and would be used over time when conditions allowed.

Fur prices tumbled to less than one dollar per animal, reducing the harvest from a high of almost 30,000 muskrats at the start of the decade to a low of 803 for only two trappers participating in the 1959–60 season.

Wild Turkey

Turkey reintroductions had been tried in Wisconsin with various pen-raised stock since the turn of the century. Over 3,000 game farm turkeys were released in Grant and Sauk counties between 1929 and 1939. Recognizing the state still had potential to establish a wild bird population, Wisconsin solicited the services of Roger Latham, a Pennsylvania biologist and wild turkey expert, to survey the state in 1954 and evaluate turkey stocking potential. His final report recommended that the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area in northern Juneau County (central Wisconsin) offered the best opportunity for success.

As a result of Latham's recommendations, 69 adult wild turkeys were obtained from Pennsylvania. They were sexed, weighed, banded, and released in the Meadow Valley Wildlife Area vicinity. Turkey broods were observed in the spring of 1955, stimulating game managers to go further with the program. Another 217 turkeys were purchased from Pennsylvania and released in 1956, followed by 460 more in 1957.

Game farm stock turkeys proved to be a poor choice for reintroductions in Wisconsin.



WALTER BARTSKY

Reports from volunteers and WCD field personnel over the next four years were encouraging. However, the wild population dropped dramatically in 1958 because of the severe 1957–58 winter and an inadvertent introduction of blackhead disease from game farm stock obtained from Pennsylvania. A future hunting season appeared very much in doubt.

Prairie Chickens

In 1958, Madison native and longtime high school teacher Paul Olson (later inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame) coordinated a unique prairie chicken management program with the Dane County Conservation League on the Buena Vista Marsh located in central Wisconsin. This area of the state had been the home base for Fred and Fran Hamerstrom since 1936, and their assemblage of data on prairie chickens became the cornerstone for an undertaking spearheaded by Paul Olson to purchase land in central Wisconsin for prairie chicken habitat restoration and management.

The Dane County Conservation League sponsored the prairie chicken project, but the WCD and a new organization called the Society of *Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus* would provide most of the funding for land acquisition and management over the next 50 years. The project was the earliest wildlife success story to emerge from the private sector in Wisconsin and received national recognition.

Prairie chickens were also hanging on at the Mead Wildlife Area (Marathon, Wood, and Portage counties) because of the land management efforts of project manager John Berkahn. This remnant population persisted throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Elk

Most authorities believed that a poacher shot the last surviving elk in Wisconsin in the late 1940s. However, a picture of 12 elk running across a field near Woodruff in 1952 showed otherwise. No other evidence of elk in the wild was produced after that picture was taken.

Regulations

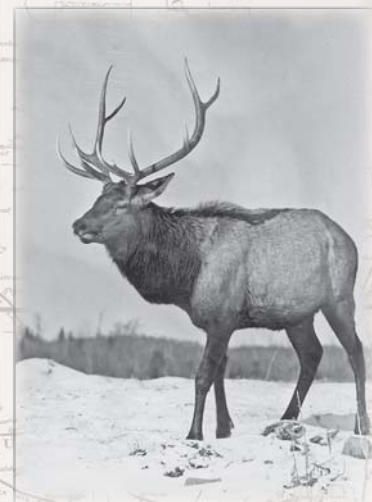
The Conservation Congress continued to work effectively in generating public interest in fish and wildlife regulations as well as providing a public forum for discussing fish, wildlife, and enforcement programs. The group had established credibility with the Legislature and the Conservation Commission as a legitimate public voice on conservation matters. While deer issue discussions still tended to be somewhat contentious, the relationship was reasonably good. Significant new regulations created in the decade included:

- Deer licenses required (1951)
- Deer back tag required (1951)
- Blaze orange clothing legalized for deer hunting (1951)
- Deer back tags required to be visibly displayed (1953)
- Mandatory deer registration (1953)
- First late archery deer season (December 1953)
- Season limit of one archery-killed bear restored (1954)
- Mandatory archery-killed deer registration (1956)
- Mandatory bear registration (1956)
- Wildlife exhibit licenses authorized (1957)
- Party permit (camp deer) deer authorized (1957)

Game Harvest Trends

The game census in Wisconsin consisted of a tabulation of game census cards attached to hunting and trapping licenses and voluntarily mailed to the department by cooperating sportsmen. This technique worked fairly well from 1932 until 1950. Researcher Donald R. Thompson strengthened game survey techniques and expanded the database after 1950 by creating more formal field surveys (ruffed grouse, pheasants, mourning doves), randomly polling landowners and rural mail carriers, and examining *crop service records*, but returns fell to unacceptable levels by 1958.

Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus
Scientific name for the prairie chicken.



Crop service records
U.S. Department of Agriculture
records of row crop production.

The Gamekeepers

Thompson then developed a revised survey strategy in 1959. He mailed a new hunter questionnaire to 30,000 hunters randomly selected from licenses sold the previous year. The new information enabled the Game Management Division to monitor the harvest with even more precision. The sample size was reduced to 20,000 in 1960. However, the harvest numbers obtained from the questionnaire were still considered an index for trend determinations and not absolute numbers.

Waterfowl harvest information also came from the voluntary game census cards through 1958, but in 1959, the source switched to federal administrative reports. Getting a handle on furbearer trends was difficult because they were hunted, trapped, and bountied and therefore tabulated by different systems. Voluntary census cards and bounty claims were the primary reporting mechanism in the early days; fur buyer questionnaires and registration became the more modern recording devices in the 1950s.

Big game harvest trends were also dependent upon voluntary reporting from 1932 through 1952. The number of "transportation tags" issued to each successful archer determined the actual bow kill from 1947 to 1955. Mandatory gun deer registration was established in 1953, and the same requirement for bow deer hunting and gun/bow bear hunting in 1956 greatly improved harvest accuracy and hunter confidence in these numbers.

Profession Recognized

Fish and game personnel got a shot in the arm in 1959 when the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters published an article on the fish and game professions in the fall issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. The article had been written by outdoor writing legend Gordon MacQuarrie just before his death November 10, 1956, but had never been published. MacQuarrie was a longtime supporter of good conservation and those who promoted it. He had founded the *Milwaukee Journal* outdoor page in 1936 and wrote informative and hard-hitting articles on conservation during his years on the *Journal* staff. In the 1959 *Wisconsin Academy Review* article, "Here Come the Biologists," MacQuarrie extolled the new profession that had emerged after the war. The following excerpts were his views on the subject:

Now that the airplane is here to stay and no one objects to vaccinations against smallpox, it is remembered that yesterday's fishing and hunting man got his information about coming seasons from a whiskered old guide who lived a quaint and smoky life back in the cutover. This oracle of the gurgling pipe was an eminent figure of his time. He tested the thickness of muskrat houses and peeled onions in the dark of the moon to forecast weather. In the off seasons when he wasn't guiding, he had a lot of time to think, and he could show you how a hair from a horse's tail would turn into a snake if you put it in a rain-barrel. A few of them are still around, but not too many, and those that persist are often synthetic, self-made characters upholding an old tradition for the sake of local color, and usually sadly in need of dry cleaning.

The genus began disappearing as long as 20 years ago when bright young men with book l'arnin' began getting interested in game and fish. In the hey-day of those uncombed fakers, if a hunter wanted a prognosis about an impending duck season, the old fraud would provide him with a prediction based upon the blue-winged teal nests he encountered in casual rambles between his still and his salt lick.

Today, there is no guessing on continental duck production. The game managers, the game biologists, the conservation wardens, all of the states and prairies provinces of Canada just pile up a factual picture of the duck production by going out in the field and counting them. That count and attendant forecasts of plenty or scarcity has been reliable for more than 15 years, and gets more accurate with each passing year.



Gordon MacQuarrie was a longtime supporter of good conservation and those who promoted it.

They will tell you, these bright young men from the universities, what the average size of the duck clutch was in Manitoba, how the birds made out in the critical drought periods, and during molting, and when the wildfowl get off for the south. It is these trained men of science who forecast with remarkable accuracy what the duck hunter may expect along the flyways of America.

So it goes in a world of change and progress. The old giveth way before the new. The prophet with the whiskers and the gurgling cornucopia did give something to the world, but not much, except humor, on this order: At a wordy public battle in Wisconsin, this reporter listened to the whiskered pundits of the backwoods. They declaimed in the presence of several qualified and patient biologists, plus William J. P. Aberg, who was then chairman of the state Conservation Commission. Pains were taken to set the old geezers aright. Toward the end of the day, Bill Aberg, waving an olive branch, asked one particularly rock-headed bush rat what he really thought about the proposed deer management plans. The gaffer did then asseverate:

"I haven't made up my mind. But when I do I'm going to be damn bitter about it."

No contests in which these biologists have been engaged have been more bitter or more fraught with sloppy emotion, than the problem of managing deer in this country, especially the white-tailed deer. Pennsylvania, New York, Michigan, Colorado, Minnesota, to name a few, have gone through the battle to reduce deer herds to the point at which the animals can be sustained by their natural food without dying of malnutrition in hard winters. Not all of the states have won the battle. This is because they permit, for political reasons, the untrained and the emotional to have a hand in the management of this critter.

The biologists are not guessing about deer; they don't care a fig what grampaw [sic] said about them, or how he made the popple trees bend and sway with the ba-r-o-o-m of his .45-90. The biologists have pitted their conclusions, drawn from long study, against the empirical opinions of the whiskered, gurgly pipe school—and in many states they have won, at least for the present. But the barbershop biologist, lineal descendant of the "old guide," is a tough and resourceful fellow, and he will be around for some time to come, albeit in a diminishing role as years pass by.

The article received wide distribution across the country and served to enlighten the public on the abilities of the fish and game professional. It also bolstered the morale of the biologist at a time when the public and the politician were wearing them down. Some felt MacQuarrie's views were a turning point in their careers as they looked forward to better days with a more informed public.

MacQuarrie was being quite clairvoyant when he pinpointed this particular problem for the wildlife profession so soon in its history. The scenario he described would be repeated many times during countless meetings between biologists and the public over the next 50 years. It seemed that no matter how solid the scientific data, some "expert" could refute all of it simply by saying, "I've been hunting all my life and...."

